Letter One

[309a] Plato to Dionysius: Do well![1]

After I had spent so much time[2] with you[3] and had become most trusted of all in managing your realm,[4] you were receiving the benefits while I was enduring the slanders, which were vexatious.[5] For I knew that none

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[1] This greeting, which appears to have been peculiar to Plato (see Lucian, *Pro lapsu inter salutandem* 4; Diogenes Laertius, 3.61), opens each of the thirteen letters except the third, which instead begins with a discussion of the greeting (see also 339b8-c2, 352b1-4, 360a1-4). (To Dornseiff, this is a sign of the *Letters*' artful composition; 1934, 223.) No English translation captures the ambiguity of the Greek *eu prattein*: it is unclear whether Plato bids his addressees to "do good," i.e., to "act well" in a moral sense, or rather to "fare well" in the sense of "to prosper." Harward suggests the salutation "covers the two meanings" (1932, 163 n1; cf. Morrow 1962, 191n2; Post 1925 139 n1). A kind of reflection on this ambiguity is contained in Plato's *Alcibiades* (116b2-d6); see also *Charmides* 172e7-a3, *Gorgias* 507b8-c7, *Republic* 353e1-9 and 621d2-3; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 11.8; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1095a14-22, *Politics* 1325a34-b21.

[2] The first word of the *Letters* following the salutation is *diatripsas*, the aorist participle of *diatribein*, "to spend time." The word can be difficult to translate. It refers to one's being occupied with something, but can range in meaning from the negative sense "to waste time" or "to lose time," to the more neutral "to be busy" with something, and even the more specific "to be engaged in teaching" (see Bunyeat and Frede 2015, 147-9). Plato marks the significance of this word by making it begin the *Letters*: the question of Plato's habitual "occupation" or "pastime," and of why he "spent so much time" in Syracuse is thematic. The word and its cognates appear eight times in the *Letters*: twice here in Letter One (309a1, b6), twice in Letter Five (321c4, 322a2), once in Letter Six (322e3), and three times in Letter Seven (329b2, 330c1, 338a1). I try always to use the phrase "to spend time" in translating the verb, but variation in Plato's use of the associated noun has called for different translations in different places, which I indicate in footnotes.

[3] Plato employs the second person plural for the first several lines of the letter, up to and including "spent so much time with you" at 309b5. It should be noted that this is not a sign of formality or deference in Greek, but a true plural: "the Greek address system contains no trace of any type of T/V distinction. There is only one 2sg. pronoun, *sú*; its plural, *humeîs*, is never used for a singular addressee in ordinary language" (Dickey 1997, 7). See Morrow 1932, 162; Souilhé 2003, n3 *ad loc*, Bury 1929, 395 n2.

[4] "Realm" translates *archēn*, which can range in meaning from "office" to "empire," or, in other contexts, "origin" or "beginning."

[5] Or "disgusting," "hard to take" (*duschereis*). The word is not related to *aganaktō*, which is the word elsewhere translated by forms of the verb "to be vexed," but rather to *duscherainō*, consistently translated by the verb "to be disgusted."

of the more brutal things would seem to have been done with me giving you my consent; for all those taking part in the regime [309b] with you are witnesses on my side, many of whom I aided, saving them from no small loss. But, having often kept guard over your city as an autocrat,[6] I was dispatched[7] more dishonorably than would be proper if you were dismissing a beggar and ordering him to sail away after having spent so much time with you. I, therefore, will henceforth deliberate in a less humane[8] way concerning what pertains to myself, whereas you,[9] "being such a tyrant, will dwell alone."[10]

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[6] "Autocrat" is scarcely more than a transliteration of *autokratōr*, which generally designates a position of plenipotentiary authority in political, military, or diplomatic affairs. A more specific translation is impossible here because it is unclear what specific position Plato claims he held—though we should note the precedent among the Syracusans, dating back at least to Dionysius the Elder, of designating their leaders *stratēgoi autokratores*, "generals with full powers" (see especially 353a9-b4; also Plutarch, *Dion* 3.2, 29.2, 33.1, 48.2). Plato's use of this term in this place has been the focus of much debate. Letter One has, of all the letters, one of the longest traditions of skepticism regarding its authenticity, in large part because readers have felt, partly on the basis of the other letters, that "Plato could never have described himself as the 'sole Dictator' (*autokratōr*) of Syracuse" (Bury 1929, 393; see also Hackforth 1913, 37; Edelstein 1966, 133-4; Harward 1932, 162; Field 1930, 199; Souilhé 2003, lxxxvii). The hypothesis of Ficino, that Dion was the true author of the letter, was long influential (Brisson 2004, 7), but has finally been abandoned in the face of overwhelming objections (Hackforth 1913, 36 n1, Harward 1932, 162; Bury 1929, 393). The question must be reconsidered in light of the possibility that the *Letters* is a carefully composed unity; see Wohl 1998 (67-8), Altman 2012 (267). Compare 324c6-d1.

[7] "Dispatched" translates *apostellontōn*, a verb closely related to *epistolai*, "letters," the title of the work. See n xxxx below [313c]. The same word appears in Letter Twelve below (359e1).

[8] "Less humane" is an attempt to split the difference between the possible readings of *apanthrōpoteron*—literally "further from human," but this could mean "more *in*human" as in "crueler" or "more misanthropic," "more unsocial." The line appears to be the source of a tradition that held Plato to have been misanthropic and solitary (Harward 163 n3, Brisson 2004, 79 n6).

[9] Here and for the rest of the letter, Plato switches to the second person singular.

[10] "Apparently a 'tag' from some tragedy" (Bury 1929, 395 n2). Harward suggests the lost drama from which this line appears to be quoted may also have been the source of the phrase "in a less humane way" (*apanthrōpoteron tropos*) (1932, 163 n3); see n *xxxx* above.

As for the shining gold, [309c] which you gave in dismissing me, Bacchius,[11] the bearer of this letter, is bringing it to you; for it wasn't even sufficient as a travel allowance, nor was it advantageous as any other means of livelihood, preparing the greatest disrepute for your, the giver, and not much less for me, the receiver, wherefore I do not accept it. But it is clear that to receive or to give such an amount makes no difference to you, so take it back and tend to some other one of your companions as you did me; for I myself [309d] have been sufficiently tended to by you.

Indeed, it is a propitious moment for me to quote the [saying] of Euripides, that when other problems someday converge upon you, "you will pray to have such a man standing by your side."[12] And I wish to remind you why the majority of the other tragedians, too, whenever they bring forward a tyrant being put to death by someone, make him shout [310a] "Bereft of friends, O woeful [me], I am slain!" Not one has made him be slain for a scarcity of gold.[13] And this poem doesn't seem bad to those with mind:

> It is not glittering gold that is scarcest in the life of mortals, hard of hope;
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> Nor does adamant, nor do couches of silver, set before a human being, upon inspection, dazzle the sight;
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> Nor are the fertile fields of the broad earth, when laden [with crops] adequate

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[11] We know nothing of this Bacchius. Nails tells us that the name seems rather to have been Italian than Athenian (2002, 66).

[12] The verse and all the others to follow are unattested outside of this letter.

[13] The word "slain" appearing twice here translates forms of the verb *apollumi*, which I have otherwise translated "destroy" or "ruin."

As is the intellect of good, like-minded men.

[310b] Be strong,[14] and recognize how greatly you have erred with us, so that you may bear yourself better toward others.

[14] This is the literal translation of a valediction so common it is often translated simply "farewell." It also occurs at the end of Letter Ten (358c7) and near the ends of Letters Two (314c4) and Thirteen (363c9).

Letter Two

Plato to Dionysius: Do well!

I heard from Archedemus[15] that you hold not only that I ought to keep quiet concerning you, but also that my associates ought to keep from doing or saying anything nasty concerning you—but that you make an exception for Dion only. [310c] This speech, "Dion is an exception," signifies that I do not rule my associates. For if I were thus ruling the others, and you, and Dion, we and all the other Greeks would have more good things, as I claim. As it is, I myself am great by rendering myself a follower of my own reason. And I say these things because Cratistolus and Polyxenus[16] have said nothing sound[17] to you, of whom they say [310d] that one or the other says he heard many of those with me accusing[18] you at Olympia. Perhaps he hears more keenly than I do: for I did not hear it. But it seems to me that, in the future, you ought to do as

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[15] This Archedemus, not to be confused with any other from Greek history (e.g., Archedemus of Pelekes, of Athens, or of Tarsus), is known only from the *Letters*. We are to learn later in this letter that he is serving as letter carrier and go-between for the present epistolary exchange (313d-e), and in later letters of other important roles he played in the Syracusan drama (319a, 349d). He appears to have been an associate of Archytas (339a-b), himself an important figure in the *Letters* (see n xxxx below [at 338c]).

[16] This is the only known mention of Cratistolus. Polyxenus is mentioned again at the end of this letter (314c7) and in Letter Thirteen, where we learn that he was a pupil of the famous sophist Bryson (360c5). Alexander of Aphrodisias reports the tradition crediting Polyxenus with a version of the "Third Man Argument" against the Platonic doctrine of the Forms (*Commentary on Aristotle's* Metaphysics 990b15, 64.28 ff). He is also mentioned at Diongenes Laertius 8.76. The chronology does not seem to allow for this Polyxenus to have been the same as the brother-in-law of Dionysius the Elder mentioned at Plutarch, *Dion* 4-5; see Nails 2002, 253.

[17] Lit. "nothing healthy."

[18] Reading *katēgorountōn* ("accusing") with the best MSS. Burnet and Souilhé both prefer *kakēgorountōn* ("speaking ill of"), which differs by only a letter and is suggested as an emendation by a second hand above the line of main text in MS O. Souilhé also cites the later MSS. Z and V as containing his preferred reading, but from my examination he appears to be mistaken in the former case. Neither Burnet nor Souilhé note that, e.g., the 15th C. MSS L, e, and f all, like A, give only *katēgorountōn*, with no suggested emendation.

follows: whenever someone says some such thing about anyone among us, send me a note to ask [about it]. For I shall neither shrink from, nor be ashamed of, speaking the truth.

Well then, here is how things happen to stand for you and me with respect to each other. To no one among the Greeks, so [310e] to speak, are we ourselves unknown, nor is our intercourse being passed over in silence. Let it not escape your notice that it will not be passed over in silence in the time to come either—such are those who are getting news of it, given that it came to be no short time ago and not without commotion. Well then, why do I say this?[19] I will say, starting from the top.

Naturally, practical wisdom[20] and great power come together in the same place, and they always pursue and seek each other and come to be together. And then, human beings also enjoy both conversing about them themselves and hearing others do so, both in private intercourse and [311a] in poems. For example, whenever human beings converse about Hiero and Pausanias the Lacedaemonian, they enjoy bringing up their intercourse with Simonides, what he did and said with them.[21] And

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[19] lit.: "what am I saying now?" or "what do I mean now?"

[20] "Practical wisdom" translates the Greek word *phronēsis*, which is traditionally rendered in English as "prudence." It is to be distinguished from *sophia*, "wisdom" as such, i.e., from the primary object of *philosophia* ("love of wisdom"). My choice of the phrase "practical wisdom" is thus meant to suggest a distinction from "theoretical wisdom." Yet *phronēsis*, has as its root a word related to "mind" and "thought" (cf. *phrēn*, *phronein*). It is therefore nebulously positioned between scientific or theoretical knowledge and well-honed talent or learned ability. Generally, it refers to the possession of that knowledge and good sense that enable one to direct private or political affairs successfully toward a given end. Consider Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.5-8 and cf. [Plato], *Definitions* 411d5-7 with 414b5-9; see also Strauss 1952, 148n2.

[21] Hiero was tyrant of the Sicilian cities of Gela and Syracuse from 485 and 478 BC respectively until his death in 467 BC; tradition holds him to have been a lover and patron of the arts, which flourished under his reign (Aelian, *Varia Historia* 4.15, 9.1). His association with Simonides of Ceos (ca. 556 – 468 BC), the prolific and illustrious lyric poet remembered for his love of gain and love of pleasure (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1391a8-12; Plutarch, *An Seni Respublica* 786b; Aelian,

they are wont to sing the praises[22] of Periander of Corinth and Thales of Miletus together,[23] and of Pericles and Anaxagoras,[24] and again of

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Varia Historia 9.1; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 12.5, 14.73; Strauss 2000, 184-5, cf. 50), is memorably portrayed in Xenophon's *Hiero* (see also Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.22, with Strauss 2000, 104-5). He is mentioned again at 336a8 below. Pausanias was a leading Spartan general in the Persian wars of the early fifth century BC, infamous for treasonously conspiring with the Persians thereafter (Thucydides 1.128-134). Some Simonidean verses are speculated to have been commissioned by Pausanias (Molyneux, *Simonides* 198; Boedker and Sider, *The New Simonides* 38-41, 98-104), but there is virtually no extant evidence of any interaction between them outside of the present Platonic suggestion (see Plutarch *Cons. ad Ap.* 6; Aelian, *Varia Historia* 3.41). Plato's Socrates twice engages in interpretive discussions of Simonides' poetry (*Republic* 331d4-2c3, 335e1-6a7; *Protagoras* 338e6-47a5, cf. 316d3-9).

[22] "Sing the praises of" translates *humnein*, related to the English "hymn." This is different from the word translated "sing of" below (311b7), *aidousi*, related to the English "ode." Both words can range in meaning from "sing of" to "celebrate," though the former word gravitates a bit more strongly to the latter meaning. For the relationship between the two, consider Plato, *Laws* 700a7 ff.

[23] Periander, tyrant of Corinth from 627 to 585 BC, was known for being violent, harsh, and lawless (Herodotus 3.48-54). Yet he is also remembered, not only as an effective ruler, but even as a wise man, and he is traditionally included among the legendary "Seven Sages of Greece" (see Diogenes Laertius 1.97-98, cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1284a26-36, 1313b22-24, 1315b11-39). Thales of Miletus (c. 624 – c. 546 BC) is often regarded as the first of the pre-Socratic philosophers (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 983b17-4a3). In Plato, Thales is described as having been so completely absorbed in theoretical contemplation as to be hopelessly unaware of imminent practical affairs (*Theaetetus* 174a3-b1, *Greater Hippias* 281c3-8; cf. Plutarch, *Convivium* 2), though other reports indicate that he was willing and able to turn his theoretical knowledge toward beneficial application (Herodotus i.74-5, 170; Aristotle, *Politics* 1259a-19, but cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1141b2-8). There is no evidence that Periander and Thales ever associated or even met; they are connected only by the tenuous bond of their inclusion among the "Seven Sages." Yet in the one place in which Plato might therefore have named them together in his dialogues, he avoids doing so: his Socrates' enumeration of the seven sages in the *Protagoras* curiously replaces Periander with Myson of Chen (343a1-5; see also Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos* 3).

[24] Pericles (c. 495 – 429 BC), one of the most influential and most celebrated statesmen and generals in Athenian history, oversaw the ascent of Athens' imperial splendor to its peak during its "Golden Age" in the mid-fifth century; see Thucydides' presentation of his speeches and deeds in the first two books of his history of the Peloponnesian War, and cf. Plato's Socrates' discussions of him at *Phaedrus* 269a-270a, *Alcibiades* 118b-119a and 124c, *Gorgias* 515c-19a, *Meno* 94a-5a, 319d-20b, and *Menexenus* passim—for a more comprehensive biography, see Plutarch's *Pericles*. Anaxagoras (c. 510 – c. 428 BC), a pre-Socratic philosopher famous for his impious claims about the material nature of the heavenly bodies (*Apology of Socrates* 26d1-6, *Cratylus* 409a7-c2), played an important role in the Platonic Socrates' philosophic development

Croesus and Solon as wise and Cyrus as one in power.[25] And the poets, imitating these things, bring together Creon [311b] and Tireseas,[26]

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as described in the *Phaedo* (95e8-99d2). In that context, and in Aristotle, Anaxagoras is discussed above all for his teaching that *nous* ("mind") is responsible for separating the chaotic mixture of infinite, heterogeneous elements into the cosmic order we perceive (Aristotle, *Physics* 187a12-8a18, *Metaphysics* 984a11-b22, 985a10-21, 989a30-b21, 1075b8-10; see also Diogenes Laertius, s.v.). The friendship between Pericles and Anaxagoras appears to have been mutually beneficial. Pericles' Anaxagorean education made him a shrewder statesman and an abler orator (Plato, *Phaedrus* 269a5-70a8; Plutarch, *Pericles* 6, 8.1). In turn, Anaxagoras, who appears rather to have *lacked* a certain measure of prudence (Plato, *Greater Hippias* 281b5-3b3; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.7.6-7), is said to have found support and protection for his theoretical pursuits from the powerful Pericles, especially when he at last came to be tried for impiety by the city of Athens (Plutarch, *Pericles* 16.5-7, 32; *Nicias* 23.3). It is interesting to note that Plutarch draws a direct comparison between Anaxagoras's education of Pericles and Plato's of Dion; see *Maxime* 1, 4, and cf. *Nicias* 23.2-4 with *Dion* 24.1-2.

[25] The word for "one in power" is *dunastēn*, so translated because of its relation to *dunamis* ("power" at 310e5 above). "Wise" translates *sophous*; see note xxxx above [at 310e].

Croesus (c. 595 – c. 546 BC), king of Lydia from 560 until his armies were defeated by Cyrus near the end of his life; conquered vast territories in Asia minor and was the possessor of legendary wealth; Solon (c. 638 – c. 558 BC), Athenian poet, lawgiver, and one of the "Seven Sages" along with Thales and Periander, is often credited as the founder of Athenian democracy (see Aristotle, *Const. Ath.*6-14 and cf. *Politics* 1273b34-4a21; see also Plutarch, *Solon*, Diogenes Laertius s.v.); Cyrus (c. 600 – c. 530 BC), usually styled "Cyrus the Great," was the conqueror and founder of the vast Persian empire. Stories of all three are chronicled by Herodotus, whose portrayal of the relationship between Croesus and Cyrus in particular is reimagined by Xenophon in his *Education of Cyrus*, a philosophical-historical fiction based on the life and rise to power of the Persian monarch. Despite Plato's suggestion here, no extant sources tell of any meeting between Solon and Cyrus, though Solon's wisdom is conveyed to Cyrus *through* Croesus in Herodotus's telling. There, Solon visits Croesus in Sardis and, to the latter's consternation, refuses to affirm that the king is, on account of his riches, the happiest man he has seen (1.30-33). Croesus angrily dismisses Solon, failing to see the wisdom of the Athenian's insistence that a man's happiness cannot be assessed until the manner of his death is known, but finally recognizes the truth of Solon's judgment when he is on the point of being killed by Cyrus. Croesus's explanation of Solon's wisdom in that moment produces a change of heart in Cyrus, who decides to spare his vanquished foe, and Croesus lives on for a time as an advisor to Cyrus, especially regarding Lydian affairs (1.85-90, 154-6; see also 1.46-56 and cf. Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus* 7.2).

[26] Creon was the uncle (and brother-in-law) of Oedipus, the fabled ruler of Thebes, and is featured prominently in Sophocles' Theban plays. Tiresias was a blind, Theban seer famous from a variety of episodes in Greek mythology and literature (notably, his encounter with Odysseus at *Odyssey* 11.90-150). He, too, figures in Sophocles' Theban plays. In *Antigone*, Creon and Tiresias come to bitter enmity over the seer's claim that the gods disapprove of

Polyidus and Minos,[27] Agamemnon and Nestor and Odysseus and Palamedes[28]—and as it seems to me, the first human beings brought

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Creon's refusal to allow the traitorous Polyneices to be buried (988-1090); in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, however, when Oedipus becomes angry over Tiresias' divinations, he accuses Tiresias of having taken pay from Creon to invent his dire prophecies (300-462). In Euripides' *Phoenecian Women*, Creon must press Tiresias firmly to reveal his divination, which proves devastating to Creon: he must sacrifice his only unwed son to save Thebes from Polyneices' army (834-959). Creon resolves to preserve his son at the city's expense, but unlike in Sophocles' presentations, Euripides' Tiresias is not treated harshly for bearing bad news from the gods. The Euripidean encounter is the only one ever mentioned by Plato: Socrates likens himself and Alcibiades to Creon and Tiresias respectively at the end of the *Second Alcibiades* (151b4-c2).

[27] Minos, the legendary Cretan lawgiver, was known in Greek mythology as a son of Zeus (Homer, *Iliad* 13.449-50, 14.321-2; *Odyssey* 11.568-71, 19.178-9) and a judge in the underworld (Plato, *Apology of Socrates* 40e7-1a6, *Gorgias* 523e6-4a7, 526c1-d2). In Plato, he is presented as having created the Cretan law code with direct guidance from Zeus (*Minos* 318c4 ff, *Laws* 624a1-b3; cf. Thucydides, 1.4, 8). The only well-preserved story concerning the fabled seer Polyidus is the one connecting him to Minos (Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Biblioteca* 3.3; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 136). In this story, Polyidus is identified by a prophecy as the man who will find Minos's lost son, Glaucus. When Polyidus discovers the boy drowned in a barrel of honey, Minos insists that the seer bring his son back to life, locking him up with the corpse and a sword. Polyidus uses the sword to kill a snake, observes a second snake reanimating the first with the use of a plant, and hence discovers how to resurrect Glaucus. Finally, before Polyidus can leave Crete, Minos insists that he teach Glaucus the art of divination. Polyidus obliges, but then before he sails away, tells Glaucus to spit in his mouth; upon doing so, the boy loses all memory of the art. This story, and others concerning Polyidus, may have been the subject of a number of lost tragedies, such as Sophocles *Manteis*, and Euripides' *Polyidus* and *Bellerophon*.

[28] Agamemnon and Nestor are among the heroes of Homer's *Iliad*, kings of Argos and Pylos respectively. Agamemnon commanded the entire Achaean army in the siege of Troy; Nestor is portrayed as beyond the age of fighting strength by the time of the Trojan War, valued more for the counsel drawn from his long experience than for his strength or bravery. Yet while Nestor was undoubtedly a persuasive speaker (Plato, *Laws* 711d6-e7 and cf. Homer, *Iliad* 1.247-9 with Aristophanes, *Clouds* 1055-57), he often appears long-winded and vain, and some of his advice proves questionable.

Odysseus, king of Ithaca, is another Homeric hero of the *Iliad* and the protagonist of the *Odyssey*, which recounts his tortuous journey and eventful arrival home from Troy. He is known above all for his wiliness. Palamedes was a fabled wise man, sometimes identified as the inventor of the alphabet among other things (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 277; Smith, *Dictionary* 92-3). A certain tradition holds that, when Odysseus, who had pledged an oath of allegiance to Agamemnon, attempted by feigning madness to avoid joining in the expedition against Troy, it was Palamedes who exposed his ruse (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 95, Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3, Philostratus, *Heroicus* 33-4). Plato and Xenophon both suggest that Palamedes was killed unjustly, comparing his fate with Socrates', and Xenophon specifies that it was Odysseus,

together Prometheus and Zeus in the same way[29]—and of these, they sing of some coming into conflict with each other, others into friendship, and still others into friendship at one time and into conflict at another, being like-minded about some things and conflicting about others. I say all these things wishing to demonstrate the following: [311c] that when

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envious of Palamedes' wisdom, who killed him (Plato, *Apology* 41b1-3; Xenophon, *Apology* 26, *Memorabilia* 4.2.33). Stories vary, however, in their identification of the culprit and the motive in Palamedes' death (see, e.g., Xenophon, *On Hunting* 1.11 and Euripides, *Orestes* 433). Euripides wrote a *Palamedes*, which has been lost (see Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* 768-84). According to William Smith, "The story of Palamedes, which is not mentioned by Homer, seems to have been the first related in the Cypria, and was afterward developed by the tragic poets, especially Euripides, and lastly by the sophists, who liked to look upon Palamedes as their pattern" (93). Gorgias wrote a *Defense of Palamedes*, which is extant.

There is an ambiguity in Plato's list regarding these last four characters. While it is natural to think of them as representing two pairs, the use of particles in the Greek strongly suggests a single grouping with Agamemnon as the "ruler" and Nestor, Odysseus, and Palamedes as a triad of "prudent" associates (Harward 1932, 170n6). Odysseus thus comes to sight as another of the Platonic examples whose designation on the list is uncertain. For Odysseus as loyal friend to Agamemnon, see Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 841-2. For the relationship of Palamedes to Agamemnon, consider Euripdies, *Orestes* 433 and Plato, *Republic* 522d1-8. One must also consider a passage from the *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates speaks of treatises on rhetoric written by Nestor and Odysseus at Troy, contrasting their "art of speeches" with that of Palamedes; Socrates allows that he may have been using Nestor's name to speak of Gorgias and Odysseus' to speak of Thrasymachus or Theodorus; he then speaks of the art of the "Eleatic Palamedes," evidently referring to Zeno, or perhaps Parmenides (261a7-e5).

[29] The stories of the adversarial relationship between Zeus and the titan Prometheus (whose name means "forethought") are among the most famous of Greek myth. The most important extant account from antiquity is probably that of Hesiod's *Theogony:* when Prometheus tricks Zeus into choosing the undesirable parts of the animal for his portion of men's sacrifices (leaving the edible and good parts to human beings), Zeus retaliates by hiding fire from man; when Prometheus responds by stealing Zeus's fire to give to man, Zeus chains Prometheus to a rock to have his liver eaten every day by a great bird and punishes man by creating woman (507-615; but cf. *Works and Days* 42-105). Prometheus is sometimes represented as giving to man not only fire but some or all of the most useful arts, as for example in the famous retelling of the myth of Prometheus by Plato's Protagoras (*Protagoras* 320c8-2d5; see also Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 476-506). Prometheus's motives are not always clear; it seems he is always portrayed as a friend to humanity, but his wily deceits may also be motivated by rivalry with the other gods (consider Aristophanes, *Birds* 1547; for an apparently more obedient Prometheus, consider Plato, *Gorgias* 523d5-e1). Plato's Socrates seems to indicate a certain kinship with Prometheus: see *Protagoras* 361c2-d6 with *Philebus* 16b4-7a5 and *Phaedo* 99d4 ff, as well as Strauss 1953, 143n1 in context.

we meet our end, the speeches about *us* will not be passed over in silence either, so care must to be taken over them. For it is necessary, as is likely, for us to care about the time to come, since, by a certain nature, the most servile happen to think nothing of it, while the most decent do everything in such a way that, in the time to come, they will be well spoken of.[30] Indeed, I even take[31] this as evidence that those who have died have some perception of the things here; for the best [311d] souls divine[32] that these things are so, while the most depraved ones don't say it, but the divinations of the divine men are more authoritative than those of the [men] who aren't. I at least suppose, with respect to the [figures from the] past about whom I was speaking, that if it were possible for them to correct their intercourses, they would very seriously strive to be better spoken of than they are now. For us, therefore, speaking with god,[33] it is still possible, if something has not been nobly[34] done in our past intercourse, to correct it by word and by deed. [311e]

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[30] lit.: "will hear well [of themselves]."

[31] lit.: "make," not unlike in the English phrase, "What do you make of it?"

[32] The verb for the act of divining here is *manteuontai*, just as "divinations" later in the sentence is *manteumata*—related words appear three more times in the *Letters* (317e7, 323c4, 340a2-3). There is no etymological connection between these terms and the adjective *theios*, which appears later in this sentence ("the divine men"), and which in all other cases is the word translated "divine."

[33] The phrase *sun theōi eipein* is idiomatic, expressing something like the sentiment of "god willing." But the literal meaning, "to speak with (a) god," should be emphasized —not, however, as in "to have an interview with (a) god," but rather, "to say things that are consonant with the will/meaning/existence/desire of (a) god"; cf. *Protoagras* 317b7 in context. The phrase is used twice more in the *Letters* (320b3, 320c7).

[34] The adverbial form of *kalos*, one of the most important concepts in Platonic philosophy. *Kalos* encompasses a range of meanings not captured by any one English word. Most simply, it means "beautiful" in an aesthetic sense; but the domain of "beautiful" things designated by *kalos* extends seamlessly beyond the aesthetic to encompass a variety of traits and activities of the human soul, most notably those which we generally denote as "noble" in a moral sense. I will generally reserve the words "beautiful" and "noble" exclusively for cognates of *kalos*, indicating deviations from this practice in footnotes.

For I myself say that opinion and speech about the true philosophy will be better if we are decent, but if we are petty, the opposite. And in fact, we could act no more piously[35] than to take care over this, nor more impiously than to be careless of it. That this needs to happen, and where the just lies, [36] I will explain.

I came to Sicily with a reputation of being quite exceptional among those in philosophy and wishing, [312a] by coming to Syracuse, to get you as a fellow-witness in order that, through me, philosophy would be honored even among the multitude. But this turned out for me not to be clear.[37] As for the cause, however, I do not say the same thing that many would say, but rather that you came to light as not much trusting me, {wishing} to send me away somehow {and to send for others to replace me,}[38] and seeking out what my business[39] is, since you were

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[35] *Eusebesteron*, "more piously," is the comparative form of *eusebēs*, one of several Greek words that may describe the pious, sacred, or religious; this is the first occurrence of any of them in the *Letters*. *Eusebēs* in particular carries the sense of pious *veneration* or *duty*; it and its cognates appear twice in this line, and then twice in Letter Seven (325c1, 344d7). Apart from these cases, I will reserve the English words relating to "piety" for cognates of *hosios*. In general, I try to follow the example set and explained by Pangle 1980, 518-9 n7.

[36] "That this needs to happen" might quite naturally be read as "*how* this needs to happen," but what follows leads me to prefer the translation I offer in the text. "Where the just lies," by which is meant something like "what justice demands," could also be read as, "to what extent this entails what is just."

[37] The word is *euagēs*, which has more than one possible meaning. The word can mean "clear" or "illuminated," which would in this context suggest a lack of impediment or obstacle. But it may also mean "unpolluted" or "undefiled" in a religious sense (cf. *Laws* 956a2), indicating that Plato's venture was in some way impure. In either case, the sentence conveys that Plato's mission to Sicily did not meet with success.

[38] It is not clear whether the words in braces belong in the text. They appear only as marginal additions or emendations in the best MSS. Still, there is good evidence that the text just above was corrupted at some point (311d4-e2; I have rendered those lines according to the correction given in the margins of the MSS and accepted by all the editors), and that the transcribers' marginal corrections are based on older and superior MSS no longer extant. Without the bracketed words, the clause would have to read "sending me away somehow."

distrustful, as it seems to me. With this, there were many making noise, saying that you [312b] disdained me but were serious about other things. Indeed, much noise has been made about these things.

Hear, then, what it is just to do after these things, so that I may also answer what you ask as to how you and I ought to be disposed toward one another. If you have come to disdain philosophy altogether, bid it farewell. If you have heard from someone else, or if you yourself have discovered, better things than [you heard] from me, honor those. But if our things[40] are agreeable to you, then I also should be honored most. Now, then, as in the beginning, lead the way and I will follow. For if I am honored [312c] by you I will honor you, but if I am not honored I will keep quiet. Moreover, if you honor me and take the lead in this, you will seem to honor philosophy, and the very fact that you have carefully examined others too will bring you good repute among many as being a real philosopher. But if I honor you without you giving honor, I will seem to wonder at and pursue riches, and we know that this, among everyone, has no beautiful name. In summary: if you give the honor, it is an adornment to us both, [312d] but if I do, it is a reproach to us both. So much, then, concerning these things.

The little sphere isn't in right condition;[41] Archedemus will clarify [this] for you when he comes. But now, about that which is both more

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[39] *Pragma*, generally "affair" or "matter of concern," may refer specifically to philosophic problems, as at 341b8 ff; cf. *Apology of Socrates* 20c4-5, *Alcibiades* 104d3-5, and see nn xxxx and xxxx below [313a, 340b].

[40] Presumably, the philosophic teachings of Plato and his followers. Plato speaks about his philosophic doctrines or conclusions in extraordinarily vague terms throughout this letter, often apparently referring to them simply as "they" or "these things." See n xxxx below [at 313d].

[41] It is not possible to know precisely to what this "little sphere" (*sphairion*) refers. Every scholar treating this passage plausibly suggests that it may be an "orrery," a model for studying or predicting the apparently erratic motions of the "planets" (including sun and moon) against the smoothly rotating background of the stars. For evidence that Plato thought the motions of the heavenly bodies was regular and calculable, consider *Republic* 529c7-30c7 and also 616b6-17b7

honored and more divine than this, that on account of which you sent, being perplexed, it must very much be clarified by him. For according to his account, you claim that the nature of the first has not been sufficiently demonstrated to you. It must be explained to you through riddles, so that "if the writing-tablet should suffer something in the folds of sea or earth"[42] [312e] the reader will not understand it.[43]

It is like this: All things are around the king of all things and all things are for the sake of him, and that is responsible for all the noble things.[44] The

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in light of the interpretation suggested by Bloom 1991 (427-8, 471-2 n15), as well as the view of Plato's Timaeus concerning the prediction of eclipses using "models" (*mimēmata*) (40c3-d5). But cf. his Socrates' denigration of knowledge of the "divine sphere" at *Philebus* 62a2-b4. See also Plutarch, *Dion*, 19.4 and Cicero, *De Republica* 1. 14.

[42] Regarding this unusual flourish, Harward 1932 explains, "Plato has worked into his sentence fragments of a passage in a lost tragedy … It is not possible to say whether the word δέλτος [i.e., "writing-tablet"] is a part of the quotation; but in any case the word belongs to the poetic coloring" (171n16). Cf. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 755-65; Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1407b34-5. Note also that Euripides more than once speaks of the "folds" (or "leaves," or "plates") of the writing-tablet, using forms of the same word Plato here uses to speak of the "folds of sea or earth" (*ptuchē*) (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 727, 760, 794; *Iphigenia in Aulis* 98, 112).

[43] Lit. "will not recognize it," "will not know it" (*mē gnōi*).

[44] Some notes on the precise wording of this vexed sentence are necessary, especially given the careful attention it is bound to receive. In the phrase "that is responsible," the word "that" translates the demonstrative pronoun *ekeino*. The same pronoun was translated four Greek words earlier as "him" in the phrase "for the sake of him," which seems to have led most translators to prefer the reading "*he* is responsible for all the noble things." But whereas the first use of the pronoun appears to be in the masculine gender to accord with "the king," the second is unambiguously in the neuter; and while it is not impossible to refer to a masculine subject with a neuter demonstrative pronoun, this does not seem a particularly likely instance of that. I have therefore translated in the spirit of Post 1925, whose version reads "*that fact* is the cause of all that is beautiful" (my emphasis). The more typical reading, however, is also possible and should be considered. Also consider Tarrant 1993, who suggests, "the king appears to be neuter!" (170).

Post's translation brings out two further points. First, the word I have translated to "noble things" is *kalōn*, which includes also the "beautiful things"; see n xxxx above [at 311d]. Second, "responsible" in my version translates the adjective *aition.* Originally a legal term meaning "culpable," *aition* came to have another prominent meaning without the negative connotation, viz., to be "responsible" for something in the sense of being its "cause," and hence became an important term in Greek philosophy. Thus, translators (including Post) have generally preferred

second things are around a second, and the third things around a third. So the human soul reaches out to learn about them, what sort of things they are, looking to the things akin to itself, of which [313a] none is in sufficient condition. Indeed, about the king and the things of which I spoke, there is no such thing, and the soul says after this, "Well then, but what sort of thing?" This, O child of Dionysius and Doris, is the question that is responsible for all evils—or rather the labor pains coming to be in the soul about this [are responsible], and until one is relieved of them, one never really hits upon the truth.

But you yourself said to me, in the garden, under the laurels, that you had thought of this [313b] and that it was your discovery. And I said that if this appeared to you to be so, that you would have released me from many speeches. I said that I had never met[45] anyone else who had discovered this, but that the great trouble[46] for me was about this. Perhaps you heard it from someone; maybe you set out for it by divine fate—then, as though you had the demonstrations of it firmly,[47] you did not tie them down,[48] but they dart about,[49] now one way, now another

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some version of the phrase "he is *the cause* of all the noble things." But the reader might take note of the fact that Plato does not use the definite article here—he does not strictly say that "he" (or indeed, "that") is *the* cause, but rather says that "he" (or "that") is *responsible for* all of *tōn kalōn*, though admittedly, this may well amount to the same thing. The same word is used a few lines below, again without the definite article, in the phrase "responsible for all evils."

[45] "I had met" translates *entetuxēkenai*, which is related to *tuchē*, "fortune" (see n xxxx below [321c]). One might compare the expression, "I had never had the fortune to encounter anyone else..."

[46] The word *pragmateia*, translated "trouble" here, can also mean "business" or "concern," much like its more common relative, *pragma*; but unlike *pragma*, *pragmateia* likely implies an on-going or longstanding "occupation." It occurs only once more in the *Letters*, at 314a7, where I have translated it "diligent activity." See also n xxxx below [340b].

[47] "[F]irmly" is *bebaiōs*, the adverbial form of a word I elsewhere translate either "stable" or "steadfast."

[48] Scholars have rightly noted the similarity between the description of Dionysius's opinion as "not tied down" and the "fugitive slave" metaphor at *Meno* 97e6-98a3; see, e.g., Harward 1932

[313c] around the imagined thing,[50] but there is no such thing. And this has not happened to you alone, but know well that no one, after hearing me for the first time,[51] has ever been in any other state than this at the start: and though one has more problems and another has fewer, they are rid of them only with difficulty—and almost no one has few.

So then, given that these things have taken place, and now stand, in this way, we have nearly discovered, in my opinion, what you sent a letter[52]

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173 n21; Bury1961, 412 n2; Souillhé 2003, 9-10 n2. Souillhé and Bury also point to *Theaetetus* 151a ff, Socrates' famous claim to be a midwife of knowledge, as parallel to the mention of "labor pains" earlier in this passage (though, more specifically, reference should be made to 148e7); but surely, *Symposium* 206e1, in context, is of equal significance. I would suggest that the tendency of commentators to focus on the *Theaetetus* rather than the *Symposium* as relevant to this passage is related to widespread misunderstanding of Letter Two, and indeed, of the *Letters* as a whole.

[49] There is disagreement among the major MSS here, several of which seem to indicate that the text has suffered some corruption I follow the suggestion of Novotny to read *aittousi* ("they dart about"), but there are at least two alternatives. The vulgate has *aitteis*, "*you* dart about, etc.," while Burnet suggests *aittei soi*, "it darts at you , etc."

[50] The word for "imagined thing" is *phantazomenon*, which could refer, however, to something appearing to the physical senses as well as the appearance of something called up or produced by the imagination. It is in accordance with the former possibility that Post 1925 over-translates "never getting away from the appearances of things," clarifying a possible interpretation, however, in doing so; similarly, Harward 1932 has, "in the region of the apparent."

[51] Given the context, the Greek here could conceivably be construed as, "after hearing about 'the first' from me."

[52] "Sent a letter" translates *epesteilas*, cognate to *epistolē*, "letter" or "epistle," as in the title of the work. Regardless of whether that title was affixed to the *Letters* by Plato himself or a later editor, the reader may wish to track Plato's use of these words on account of the *Letters*' literary form. There are some difficulties in translation, however, regarding the verbal form *epistellō*. In many cases, it would be most natural to render this word "write" or "send" (i.e., in the present case, "what you wrote/sent")—the latter could be especially apt, since technically the verb *epistellō* need not refer to the transmission of a *written* message, but could indicate the giving of an order or the sending of a messenger. However, the English "write" is usually reserved for *graphō* and "send" for *pempō*, both common Greek words. So that the English reader may be sure of when Plato is using *epistellō*, then, I have opted to use the phrase "send a letter" for this word wherever possible, even at the cost of some awkward formulations, and have indicated deviations from this principle in footnotes.

about: how we need to be disposed toward one another. For since you are test

ing them, both in getting together with others and comparing them [313d] with the others', as well as themselves by themselves, they will now, if the test is true, grow naturally in you and you will be an intimate both to them and to us.[53]

How, then, will they and all the things we've said be [realized]? You acted correctly in sending Archedemus now; and in the future, when he comes to you to report the things from me, after these, perhaps other perplexities[54] will seize you. You'll send Archedemus to me again if you deliberate correctly, and once he's transported [the message] he'll return again. And if you do this two or three times, and [313e] sufficiently test the things sent from me, I would be amazed if the things that presently perplex you will not come to be very different than they are now. Take

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[53] The meaning of this sentence is particularly unclear because Plato specifies neither what "things" of his Dionysius is "testing" nor who the "others" are whose counterpart "things" are to serve as a point of comparison. Other translators render the sentence intelligible by specifying that Dionysius is testing Plato's "doctrines" or "principles," and that he is comparing those to the principles of other "teachers." This is likely the meaning (see n xxxx above [at 312b]), but I have left my own translation unclear so as to reproduce the bewildering effect of the original. See also n xxxx below [360b]. Note also that "grow naturally" translates *prosphusetai*, which literally refers to a biological outgrowth (of any kind); thus Morrow 1963, for example, uses the phrase "take root." I have tried with my translation to keep the reader in mind of the relation to *phusis*, the scientific or philosophic word for "nature" (cf. n xxxx below [344a]). Elsewhere, I have consistently used some version of the phrase "grow naturally" to translate the related verb *phuein*, "to grow."

[54] "Perplexities" translates *aporiai* (just as "perplex" translates part of *aporoumena* in the following sentence). There is something of a play on words in the uses of *aporia* and *emporia* in this paragraph. The root word, *poros*, refers to a means of "passage" through or across an obstacle, often a river or body of water, but can also mean simply "journey." *Aporia*, then, is to be without recourse, to have "no way out" of a difficulty, while *emporia* is merchandise or cargo that is quite literally "imported," especially by sea. The words "transport" and "cargo" in this paragraph all translate some version or cognate of *emporia*. The suggestion is that Archedemus' travelling and transporting, that is, his *emporia*, will provide the resolution to Dionysius's *aporia*.

heart, therefore, and do thus;[55] for never did you dispatch,[56] nor will Archedemus ever transport, a thing nobler and [314a] dearer to the gods than this cargo.

Beware, however, lest these things ever be exposed to uneducated human beings; for, as it seems to me, there are for the many almost no more ridiculous things to be heard than these, nor indeed for those of good natures any more amazing and more inspiring. But being spoken often[57] and for many years, they are with difficulty, like gold, purified with much diligent activity.[58] But hear the amazing thing that has come to be from it. There are human beings, and plenty of them, who have heard these things—who are, on one hand, capable [314b] of learning, and on the other hand, capable of remembering and judging by testing altogether in every way—who are now old and have been listening for no fewer than thirty years, who just now are saying to themselves that the things that once seemed to be most untrustworthy now appear most trustworthy and clearest,[59] and those which then [seemed] most trustworthy now [appear to be] the opposite. So beware in examining these things lest you come someday to regret their having been unworthily exposed now. A very great safeguard is not to write but to learn by heart; [314c] for it is not possible for things written not to be exposed. Because of these things, I have never written anything at all

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[55] These verbs are in the second person plural; presumably, Plato has both Dionysius and Archedemus in mind.

[56] This verb, *steilēis*, is the root word of *epistolai*, the title of this work. See n xxxx above [313c].

[57] Marginal notes in the best MSS suggest the insertion here of the words "and always/constantly (*aei*) heard," which are included in the text of some later MSS as well as in the quotation of Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica* 12.7).

[58] See n xxxx above [at 313b].

[59] Or "most splendid" (*enargestata*).

about these things, nor are there written works of Plato, nor will there be any at all, but those now spoken of are of a Socrates become beautiful and young.[60] Be strong[61] and be persuaded, and as soon as you have read this letter many times, burn it completely. So much for these things.

As for Polyxenus,[62] you were amazed that [314d] I would send him to you. But I give the same account now as [I did] before concerning Lycophron[63] as well as the others who are around you: with respect to conversing,[64] you are altogether superior to them, both in nature and in method[65] concerning speeches, and no one of them is refuted voluntarily, as some assume, but [rather] involuntarily. And indeed, you seem to have made use of them and to have given them gifts in a very measured way. So much concerning them—a great deal, given that it concerns such as them!

[314e] With respect to Philistion,[66] if you yourself have need of him, by all means make use of him; but if it is possible, send him off and lend him

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[60] "Beautiful" might also be "noble" or "fine" (see n xxxx above [at 311d]); "young" might also be "new."

[61] See n xxxx above [at 310b].

[62] See n xxxx above [at 310c].

[63] Perhaps the sophist mentioned by Aristotle, e.g., *Politics* 1280b8-12, *Physics* 186b25-32

[64] "Conversing" translates *to dialechthēnai*. This articular infinitive does not appear elsewhere in Plato, but it is of course closely to related to the important Platonic theme of "dialectic" (e.g., *Republic* 533a1 ff).

[65] "[M]ethod" is hardly more than a transliteration of *methodōi*, and does not in fact capture the full meaning of the Greek term. Composed of *meta-* ("with/after") and *–hodos* ("road," "path"), the original meaning of the word was something like "pursuit." More commonly, especially in philosophy, *methodos* means either the pursuit of a given inquiry or rather the *mode* in which one conducts such an inquiry; hence the sense of the English "method." The phrase *methodōi tōn logōn* in this passage, then, might be translated "mode of inquiry into speeches."

[66] Apparently the noted Locrian-Sicilian physician and teacher of Eudoxus; see Diogenes Laertius 8.86. Not to be confused with the Syracusan historian Philistus (see n xxxx below [315e]).

to Speusippus.[67] Speusippus too begs this of you. And Philistion promised me that, if you let him go, he will eagerly come to Athens. You did well to let the [man] from go the rock quarries[68]; the entreaty concerning both his household slaves and Hegesippus,[69] son of Ariston, is easy. For you sent a letter [315a] to me [saying that], if anyone should do injustice either to him or to them and you should perceive it, that you would not let it stand. And concerning Lysiclides, it is worth saying the truth: for he alone of those who came to Athens from Sicily did not change his position at all concerning the intercourse between you and me, but to the end continues always to say something good and with a view to the better things concerning the things that happened.

[67] Plato's nephew and the head of the Academy after Plato's death; he was known for his poor health. He is mentioned again in Letter Thirteen (361e2).

[68] The rock quarries at Syracuse were used as prisons. See Plutarch, *Nicias* 28.2, *On the Fortune and Virtue of Alexander* 2.1.

[69] Hegesippus and Ariston are both common Athenian names (Nails 2002, 158)—indeed, Ariston was the name of Plato's father—but nothing is known either of these men or the Lysikleides mentioned in the letter's final sentence.

Letter Three

If I sent a letter [beginning] "Plato to Dionysius: Rejoice!",[70] would I correctly [315b] hit upon the best salutation? Or rather in writing, in accordance with my customary usage, "Do well!", as I have habitually greeted my friends in the letters? For you indeed addressed even the god in Delphi, as they who then went to see [the oracle][71] reported, by wheedling him with this very same phrase: you wrote, as they say, "Rejoice and preserve the tyrant's life of having pleasure!" [315c] I, on the other hand, would not recommend doing this in a call to a human being, let alone[72] to a god: to a god, because I would be commanding against nature, for the divine lies far away from pleasure and pain; to a human being, because pleasure and pain engender much harm, the pair of them begetting badness at learning, forgetfulness, imprudence, and hubris[73] in the soul. And let these things have been said in such a way by me about the mode of address; and you, in reading them, take them in whatever way you wish to take them.

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[70] "Rejoice" here translates *chairein*, the most common word of greeting in ancient Greek. It is so common a greeting that it is often translated simply "Hail," but the literal meaning related to joy and gladness is important in what follows. Cf. *Charmides* 164d6-e5. Elsewhere in the *Letters*, the same verb is mainly used not as a greeting but as the valediction which I have translated "farewell."

[71] "They who went to see [the oracle]" translates the participle *hoi theōrountes*. The verb *theōrein* is most often used to mean "to observe" or "to contemplate," whence the English "theory" and "theorize." But Plato here employs the word in another sense, namely "to be a *theōros*," an envoy sent to consult an oracle or "to be a spectator" at a religious festival. For the practice of submitting questions to the Delphic Oracle in writing via *theōrountas*, see Fontenrose 1978, 217. The only other use of this word in the *Letters* occurs at 350b7, where it refers to Dion "being a spectator" at the Olympic games.

[72] Accepting "*mē hoti dē*," the marginal correction found in the MSS. instead of the difficult "*outi*." Burnet's further emendation to "*mēti dē*" seems unnecessary.

[73] A mere transliteration of the Greek *hubris*, "insolence" or "wanton violence." The word occurs only here and twice more in Letter Three (319b6-7) in all of the *Letters*.

No few are claiming that you were saying to some of those who came to you as [315d] ambassadors that, when I once heard you saying that you were going to colonize the Greek cities in Sicily[74] and to unburden the Syracusans by replacing the rule of tyranny with kingship, I then prevented you, as you claim, though you were eager to do these things; and that now I would teach Dion to do these very things, and that we, by means of your own intentions,[75] [315e] are taking your rule away from you. Whether you are deriving some benefit because of these speeches, you yourself know,[76] but you do injustice to me by saying the opposite of the things that happened. For I was slandered enough by Philistides[77] and many others to the mercenaries and among the majority

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[74] Referring to the Greek cities of Sicily as opposed to those founded and inhabited by the Carthaginians. The inhabitants of the former had been conquered or expelled during Dionysius the Elder's wars with Carthage in the late 5th century. See Harward 1932, 9-10, and cf. 319c7-d2, 331e2-1a3.

[75] "Intentions" translates *dianoēmasin*, which is the first appearance in the *Letters* of this word or any of its cognates. The abstract noun *dianoia* always refers to a mental activity, but has a range of meanings from the highly theoretical "thought" or "process of thinking," to the more practical and active "intention," "purpose," or "plan," i.e., a process of thought that has culminated in the conception of a plan and the resolution to execute it. Words in this family occur most of all in Letter Seven—a letter much to do with the relationship of theory and practice, of thought and action—though also here and there in Letters Three, Eight, and Eleven. These uses span the range of possible meanings. I have used "intention" and "intend" wherever possible, indicating deviations from this principle in the notes.

[76] "[K]now" here is *gignōskeis*, "recognize" or "understand," as opposed to the word I have usually reserved for the English "to know" (*eidenai*).

[77] It is generally accepted that this is Philistus, the Syracusan historian who wrote influential histories of Sicily no longer extant, and who helped to establish the tyranny of Dionysius the Elder. Though he fell into that tyrant's disfavor, it seems he came to be an important figure in the court of Dionysius the Younger and generally an opponent of Plato and Dion. See especially Plutarch's *Dion* 11-14, 19, and 35-36, as well as Nepos, *Dion* 4. It may be important to know that Philistus' historical works are thought to have painted Plato in a negative light (Morrow, 22) and may for all we know have begun to circulate in some form by the time Plato composed the *Letters*. The appellation "Philistides" in the text here has suggested to some the ignorance of a forger (Nails 2002, 240), but Harward notes that "the interchange between the patronymic and the simple name was common at Athens" (179 n5), and Morrow that "[p]roper names were often abbreviated in the manuscripts and hence variant readings could easily arise" (200 n3).

of Syracusans on account of my staying in the acropolis, and as for those outside, if there was any error, they made everything turn on me, asserting that you obeyed me in all things. But you yourself know most clearly [316a] that I was voluntarily engaging in a few of the political things in common with you at the beginning, when I supposed I could do something more; but I was taking seriously, in a measured way, both some minor things and the preludes to the laws,[78] separately from the things which you or someone else wrote in addition; for I hear that some of you were later revising them, though it will be clear which [parts are which] to those capable of distinguishing my style.[79] But therefore, as I just said, I have no further need of slander, either among the Syracusans or any others you persuade by saying these things; rather, [I am in need] much more [316b] of a defense against both the slander that occurred before and that which is now naturally growing greater and more vehement after it. For these two, it is necessary for me to make the defenses double: first, that I appropriately avoided sharing in common with you in the affairs of the city, and second, that you have not spoken [truthfully] of my counsel, nor of my prevention, [316c] [in saying] that I had come to be standing in your way when you were going to recolonize the Greek cities.

Hear first, then, the beginning of the things I spoke about first. I came to Syracuse, having been called by both you and Dion. He had

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[78] For the Platonic notion of "preludes to the laws," see *Laws* 722c6 ff.

[79] Or "to those capable of judging of my character." *Ēthos* can refer to traits of moral character (as in the titles of Aristotle's *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*), and more generally to character traits or manners developed and sustained through habitual activity (see Aristotle, *NE* 1103a14-18). Thus, the word can also mean "usage" or "custom"—or, as in the present passage, a habitual "style" of writing. I have tried to use "character" to translate *ēthos* wherever possible, indicating deviations from this practice in footnotes.

undergone my inspection, having long ago become a guest-friend,[80] and was in the midst of his prime and middle-aged, which things are altogether needed by those having even a little intelligence who are going deliberate concerning things so great[81] as yours then were; you were very young, there was great inexperience around you of the things [316d] in which one needed to have become experienced, and you were very unknown to me. After this, either a human being, or a god, or some fortune together with you cast Dion out, and you were left alone. Do you suppose that the partnership with you in political things was then mine, when the sensible partner had been ruined, and I saw the senseless[82] one left behind with many and wicked human beings, not ruling but supposing he ruled, and being ruled by, such human beings? In these [circumstances], what ought I to have been doing? Wasn't it the very thing I was doing by necessity: [316e] to bid farewell to the political things for the remainder [of the time] and to beware of the slanders of the envious; and regarding you [pl.], though you [pl.] had come to be separated from one another and were at odds, to attempt to make you [pl.] friends with each other as much as possible? Of these things even

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[80] The important Greek notion of *xenia*, roughly translated "guest-friendship" here and throughout, has no exact counterpart in modern western culture. The unwritten rules of *xenia* entailed a pious obligation to extend favors of hospitality to travelers far from home, and a similar obligation upon the traveler readily to repay those favors if an occasion to do so should arise thereafter. To have been hosted as a *xenos*, a "stranger" or "guest-friend" in a foreign city, therefore, was to have been hospitably received and to have incurred a debt of gratitude. Moreover, bonds of *xenia* might be established in other ways: two families could come to share such a relationship across generations, and a person or family could be granted a kind of diplomatic status within the framework of *xenia* by a city, regime, or ruler. The reciprocal obligations of guest-friendship were believed to fall under the jurisdiction of Zeus (hence the epithet *Xenios*; see 329b4), and transgressions could be punished by the Furies (see 357a4).

[81] Or "so many things."

[82] "Sensible" and "senseless" here translate *emphrona* and *aphrona*. The latter could well be translated "imprudent," as it is equally the antonym of *phronimon*, the adjectival form of *phronēsis*, "prudence" or "practical wisdom" (see n xxxx above [310e]). The prefix *em-* on the word *emphrona* here suggests something like "in one's senses."

you are a witness:[83] that I never gave up straining for this very thing, and, [though] with difficulty, it was nevertheless agreed by both of us [317a] that I would sail home, since war had taken hold of you [pl.], but that when peace should again come to be, both Dion and I would come to Syracuse, and that you would call us.

This is how these things came to be concerning my first voyage to Syracuse and my safe[84] return back home. As for the second: when peace had come to be, you did not call me in accordance with the agreements but sent a letter [instructing me] to come alone and claimed that you would send for Dion in his turn. Because of these things I did not go, though I then became hateful even to Dion, for he supposed that [317b] it was better for me to go and to hearken to you. One year after these things, a trireme arrived with letters from you. At the beginning of the things written in the letters was that, if I should come, all Dion's affairs would come to be to my liking,[85] but if I should not come, the opposite. I am ashamed to say how many letters then came from you, and from others [317c] because of you, from Italy and Sicily, and to how many of my intimates and acquaintances, all directing me to go and begging me to obey you in every way. It seemed to everyone, beginning with Dion, that I needed to sail and not become soft. But I was making a point of my age to them, and, concerning you, I was asseverating that you would not be able to withstand those slandering us and wishing us to come to enmity—for I both saw then and see now, with respect to the great and

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[83] Or, "Of these things, you too are a witness".

[84] Ordinarily, I reserve the "safe" to translate words related the Greek *asphalēs*, keeping these distinct from the noun *sōtēria* and the verb *sōizein* ("salvation" and "to save" respectively). Here, however, the word *sōtēria* is used to mean something like "safe arrival." I will continue to indicate such deviations from my usual practice in footnotes.

[85] "To my liking" translates the common Greek idiom, *kata noun ton emon*, literally "according to my mind."

extravagant property[86] of private men and monarchs, that in general, [317d] the greater it is, the more numerous and greater are the slanderers and indulgers in shamefully harmful pleasure it nourishes; riches and the power of the other [forms of] authority engender no greater evil [than this].

Nevertheless, having bid farewell to all these things,[87] I went, having resolved[88] that no one of my friends must ever accuse me on the grounds that, because of my indolence, all that was his, [317e] though it might not have been lost, was completely destroyed.[89] Having arrived—for you yourself already know everything that happened thereafter—I was of course requesting, in accordance with the agreement of the first letters, that you reconcile[90] with Dion and recall him. I was pointing [the way] to reconciliation, which, had you then obeyed me, would perhaps have been better than the things that have now come to pass for you, for the Syracusans, and for the other Greeks, as my opinion divines.

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[86] Lit. "substance." The Greek *ousia* famously has both the mundane meaning intended here, which refers to wealth in the form of property and financial assets (as in "a man of substance"), as well as a highly abstract ontological meaning, which refers to the substance as to the essence of a being underlying its accidental qualities or indeed to "being" as such. *Ousia* is used seven times in the *Letters*: here, just below at 318a6, and five times in Letter Seven. Only once is the philosophic meaning intended ("being' at 344b2). All other instances have been translated "property."

[87] I.e., "having dismissed the preceding considerations."

[88] Or "intending." The word is *dianoētheis*; see n xxxx above [315d].

[89] The words for "lost" (*apolesthai*) and "completely destroyed" (*diwleto*) are closely related; see n xxxx above [310a].

[90] "Reconcile" translates *oikeiōsamenon*, the mending of a relationship between kinsmen or similarly close friends. I translate *oikeiotēta* in the following line "reconciliation" to indicate the etymological link, but that word refers more simply to the relationship itself, not to its restoration. Most important, one should note the connection between these words and *oikeios*, an "intimate" or "relative," which appears in the following line (as well as in the addresses of Letters Seven and Eight; see n xxxx below [324d]). A different cluster of words (*katallagē*/*diallagē*/*diallaxis*) is translated "reconciliation" in Letters Seven and Eight (350d6, e1, 356c7).

And then, I was requesting that Dion's relatives[91] have his [property], [318a] and that it not be apportioned by those apportioning it among themselves—you yourself know who [they are]. In addition to these things, I supposed that, once I had arrived, you needed to be sending what you had been in the habit of providing him each year and more besides, not less. Since none of these things was happening, I requested to leave. After these things, you were [trying to] persuade me to remain for the year, asserting that you would sell off all of Dion's property, send half [the proceeds] to Corinth, and leave the rest [318b] to his son. I could say many things that you promised but in no way did; I cut them short on account of their multitude. For indeed, having sold off all the property[92] without persuading Dion (though you asserted you would not sell it without persuading him), you put the finishing touch, you amazing [man], to your most impetuous promises. For you found a contrivance neither noble, nor nice,[93] nor just, nor advantageous: to frighten me, as though I was ignorant of the things then going on, in order that I should not seek for [318c] the money to be sent away. For when you cast out Heraclides, seeming just neither to the Syracusans nor to me—wherefore, together with Theodotes and Eurybius, I begged you not to do these things—you, taking this as a sufficient pretext, said that even long ago it was clear to you that I thought nothing of you, but [that I preferred] Dion and Dion's friends and intimates, and since now Theodotes and Heraclides were being slandered, who were intimates of Dion, I was

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[91] Or "Dion's intimates," as I have usually translated *oikeious*.

[92] The word for "property" here is not *ousia* as elsewhere but *chrēmata*, which I usually translate "money" or "wealth."

[93] In the sense of "refined," "subtle," "clever" (*kompsēn*).

employing every [318d] contrivance so that they should not pay the just penalty.[94]

And that's how it is concerning the political things in the partnership between you and me. And if you observed any other estrangement of me from you, it is appropriate for you to suppose that all these things came to be in this way. And don't be amazed, for I would justly appear bad, to a man with mind at least, if, having been persuaded by the greatness of your rule I were to betray an old friend and guest-friend who was doing badly because of you—someone in no way worse than you, if I may say so—[318e] and choose you, the doer of injustice, and do everything in whatever way you commanded, clearly for the sake of money; for no one would claim [that there was] any other cause of my change, had I changed. But these things, having come to be in this way, produced my and your wolf-friendship[95] and lack of partnership, because of you.

My account, which is nearly continuous with the one from just now, has arrived at an account concerning that about which I was saying that a second defense must be made for me.[96] [319a] Examine, then, and

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[94] Heraclides was to become an important ally of Dion during the latter's campaign against Syracuse, which eventually ousted Dionysius the Younger. In the turbulent time following that victory, a political rivalry developed between Dion and Heraclides—to which Plato seems to allude in Letter Four (320e ff)—which itself degenerated into military conflict. In the end, Dion's reluctant acquiescence to the assassination of Heraclides appears to have precipitated his own assassination in turn. Our primary source for the details of Heraclides' role in the history of Syracuse is Plutarch's *Dion* (especially 32 ff); the summary in Harward 1932, tailored to a study of Plato's *Letters*, is excellent and considers the relevant historiographical questions (29-53). Theodotes is said by Plutarch to have been Heraclides' uncle (*Dion* 45); Eurybius appears to have been another companion of Heraclides. These two are otherwise unknown, but the incident involving them to which Plato refers here in Letter Three is presented again and in greater detail in Letter Seven (348b-9e).

[95] *Lukophillia*, "wolf-friendship," may be Plato's coinage. See Harward 1932, 180 n15.

[96] The structure of this sentence in the Greek is unusually convoluted, even if the sense is tolerably clear. See Harward 1932, 180-1 n16.

in every way turn [your attention] toward, whether I should seem to you to be lying about something and not to be speaking the truth. For I claim that, when Archedemus was present in the garden, as well as Aristocritus,[97] nearly twenty days before my voyage homeward from Syracuse, you were blaming me for the very things you now speak of: that I care more for Heraclides and all the others than for you. And you questioned me in front of them as to whether I remembered directing you, when first I arrived, [319b] to recolonize the Greek cities. And I conceded that I did remember, and that even at that time it seemed to me that these things were best. But it must also be told, Dionysius, what was said after this. For I asked you whether I would counsel you [to do] this very thing alone or also something else in addition to this. And you answered me, very much enraged and hubristically, that you supposed—wherefore what then was your act of hubris has now become a waking reality rather than a dream—you said, with very feigned laughter if I remember, that, [319c] "You directed me to do all these things once I had been educated, or else not to do them." I said that you remembered most beautifully. "So it's once I had been educated," you said, "to do geometry? Or what?" And I did not say what it occurred to me to say after these things, fearing lest, for the sake of a little phrase, [the prospect of] my sailing away, which I was expecting, should narrow after having been clear [of obstacles].

But I have said all this for the sake of the following things: don't slander me by saying that I didn't allow you to colonize the Greek cities ruined [319d] by barbarians or to relieve the Syracusans by replacing the tyranny with a kingship. For no falsehoods you could ever speak of me befit me less than these. And I would give arguments of refutation in addition to these and still clearer than them, if an adequate trial were to

[97] This Aristocritus is unknown outside of Plato's *Letters*. It is presumably the same Aristocritus to whom Plato refers at 363d2. On Archedemus, see n xxxx above [310b].

manifest itself somewhere, to the effect that I directed you [to do things], but you weren't willing to do them. And indeed, it is not difficult to say clearly how it would have been best for these things to be done for you, [319e] for the Syracusans, and for all Siceliotes.[98]

But if, sir, you, having said these things, claim not to have said them, I have my just penalty. But if you agree, then after this, holding Stesichorus to be wise and imitating his palinode,[99] replace the lie with the true account.

[98] Siceliotes were the Greek inhabitants of Sicily.

[99] The legend of the poet Stesichorus told that he was blinded for maligning Helen of Troy but had his sight restored when he wrote his *Palinode*, retracting his criticism. "Palinode" literally means a "recanting." Plato's Socrates famously follows the example of Stesichorus' palinode in the *Phaedrus* (243a2 ff).

Letter Four

Plato to Dion the Syracusan: Do well!

[320a] I suppose that my eagerness concerning the affairs that have turned out has been manifest the whole time, and that I was very serious about their being resolved for the sake of love of honor toward the noble things more than [for the sake of] anything else. [320b] For I believe it to be just that those who are in truth decent and who are doers of such things hit upon the proper reputation. Things up to the present, speaking with god,[100] are in a noble condition, but the greatest struggle concerns things yet to come. For to be distinguished in courage, speed, and strength would seem to belong also to certain others, but [to be distinguished] in truthfulness,[101] justice, magnificence, [320c] and decorum concerning all these things—anyone would grant that those who lay claim to honoring such things would appropriately be distinguished above the rest [in these characteristics]. What I now mean to say, then, is clear, but we need nonetheless to remind ourselves that it is proper for to the you-know-who [pl.][102] to be distinguished among the other human beings more than among children.[103] It needs therefore to become manifest that we are the very sorts we claim to be, especially since, speaking with god,[104] it will be easily done. [320d] For it has turned out to be necessary for

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[100] See n xxxx above [311d].

[101] Or simply "truth."

[102] An unusual phrase generally thought to refer either to philosopher kings or to members of Plato's Academy, but this is necessarily speculative. It is hard to understand, for example, how Post claims to know that "Plato expects those who have been initiated by him into the mysteries of the true philosophy to be a tribe of supermen" (1925, 144 n1).

[103] A proverbial phrase, though there appears to be some disagreement over the exact sense. Plato's Socrates employs the same idiom in describing Isocrates' superiority to his rivals at *Phaedrus* 279a6-7.

[104] See n xxxx above [311d].

others to wander far and wide if they were going to become recognized; but the situation around you now is such that people from every inhabited region (even if this is to speak impetuously) are looking toward one place, and in this place, upon you most of all. Since, then, you are being watched by all, be prepared to show up Lycurgus himself as outdated,[105] as well as Cyrus himself,[106] and anyone else who ever seemed to be distinguished for [his] character and regime, especially since many, and almost [320e] all of those here, are saying that there is a great expectation[107] that, Dionysius having been done away with, [your] affairs will come to ruin[108] on account of your love of honor as well as that of Heraclides, Theodotes, and the other notables.[109] Above all, then, may no one [of you] be such a one. But if indeed someone comes to be [this way], manifestly provide a doctor's treatment and [321a] you [pl.] would proceed toward what is best.

Perhaps my saying these things appears ridiculous to you, since even you yourself are not ignorant; but even in the theaters, I see that those competing [for the actors' prizes] are spurred on by the children—to say nothing of their friends—if one should suppose that they shout their encouragements in seriousness and with goodwill. So be yourselves

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[105] Lit. "ancient" or "old," though *archaios* can have the pejorative sense of "outdated" or "worn out" as it does here and at *Hippias Minor* 371d4.

[106] Lycurgus was credited with founding Sparta's well-known militaristic and austere political institutions, probably in the late ninth century BC; see also n xxxx below [354b]. For Cyrus, see n xxxx above [311a].

[107] Or "a great hope."

[108] "Come to ruin" is not a form of *apollumi*, the word for which "ruin" is usually reserved (see n xxxx above [310a]), but of *diaphtheirō*, meaning "destroy," "ruin," or "corrupt" (as in the corruption charge laid against Socrates).

[109] On Heraclides and Theodotes, see n xxxx above [318d].

competitors now,[110] and if there is need of anything, send us a letter. Things here are in much the same state as they were when you [pl] were here. But send a letter [321b] also [relaying] anything that has been done by you [pl] or that you [pl] happen to be doing, as we hear many things but know nothing; even now, letters from Theodotes and Heraclides have arrived in Lacedaemon and Aegina, but we, as I have said, hear many things about things here, but know nothing.

But take to heart also that you seem to some to be rather lacking in the proper courtesy. Let it not escape your notice that [321c] to act is possible through being agreeable to human beings, but stubbornness dwells with loneliness. Good luck.[111]

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[110] From here until the end of the paragraph, every appearance of the second person is plural, including the imperatives "be competitors" (*agōnizesthe*) and "send a letter" (*epistellete*). Beginning in the next paragraph, with the imperative "take to heart," Plato returns to the second person singular.

[111] I render the one-word valediction *eutuchei* (lit. "be fortunate!") into English as "good luck" here and throughout, but it should be noted that I have consistently translated the root word *tuchē* as "fortune" in hope of reminding the English reader that *tuchē* for the Greeks was more likely to evoke the idea of *divine* fortune (cf. the goddess *Tuchē*, i.e., *Fortuna*) than mere "dumb luck" (even if the latter falls within the word's scope of meaning). Note also that the verb *tunchanein*, which I translate "to happen to be" or "to hit upon," shares the same root.

Letter Five

Plato to Perdiccas:[112] Do well!

I counseled Euphraeus,[113] just as you sent a letter [instructing me to], to take care over your affairs and to spend his time on them. But it is just of me[114] also to counsel you with what is called the guest-friend's and sacred counsel [321d] concerning both the other things you would point out and how [you] need to make use of Euphraeus now. For he is a useful man in many respects, but the greatest is that of which even you are now in need, both because of your age and because there are not many counselors for the young concerning it.

For there is a certain voice of each of the regimes just as of certain animals:[115] one for democracy, another for oligarchy, and yet another for

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[112] Perdiccas III was the king of Macedon from 365 to 360 BC, some three decades before the ascension of his nephew, Alexander the Great. It seems Perdiccas was still young enough to be under the regency of his brother-in-law, Ptolemy of Alorus, for three years before the latter's assassination initiated Perdiccas's own reign (cf. Diodorus Siculus 15.60.3, 71.1-2, and 77.5 with Aeschines, *On the Embassy* 26-7). The historicity of Euphraeus's relationship to the Macedonian court is attested by Demosthenes' *Third Philippic* (59-65), which provides information that neither confirms nor contradicts anything in this letter. More relevant are the details presented in the *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus (fl. ca. 300 AD), who professes to quote from Carystius (fl. late 2nd century BC). There we learn that, under the influence of Plato's student Euphraeus, Perdiccas became so enamored of philosophic pursuits that "participation at [Perdiccas'] common meals was not allowed unless one knew how to do geometry or philosophy," and that Euphraeus himself rose to considerable power and prominence as a result of their relationship (11.119). Moreover, the story is reported that it was Euphraeus who first persuaded Perdiccas to give Phillip II (father of Alexander the Great) his political start in Macedon, resulting in the widespread opinion that "Phillip first obtained the kingship through Plato" (11.115). But even Athenaeus, who is hardly one to shy away from gossip-mongering, is quick to cast doubt on the truth of those rumors.

[113] For information on Euphraeus, see previous note.

[114] Lit. "I am just."

[115] Scholars have seen here a reference to *Republic* 493a6-c8.

monarchy. [321e] Very many would claim to know[116] them, but the majority, apart from some few indeed, fall short of understanding them. Of the regimes, then, that which would make utterance in its own voice both to gods and to human beings, and which would have its actions be consequent to its voice, always flourishes and is saved, but by imitating another it is destroyed. Not least of all with respect to these things, then, Euphraeus could come to be useful to you, though with respect to other things as well, since he is courageous; [322a] for I hope[117] that he will assist in finding out the speeches of monarchy no less than those who are concerned with your occupation.[118] Using him for these things,[119] then, you yourself will profit and, most of all, you will benefit him.

But if you should hear someone say the following things, "Plato, as it seems,[120] pretends to know what things are advantageous to a democracy, but when it was possible to speak to and to counsel the demos regarding what things were best for it, he never went up to utter a sound," say to these things that Plato has come to be late in [the life of] his fatherland and came upon the demos [322b] already elderly and having been habituated by those who came before to do many things unlike to his own counsel, since, of all things, it would be most pleasant for him to give it counsel as to a father, if he didn't suppose that he would be taking risks in vain and doing nothing fully. "So I suppose," [you'll say,] "he

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[116] "[K]now" here translates *epistasthai*. In contrast with *eidenai* (the word I have otherwise consistently translated "to know") *epistasthai* refers to a rigorous, even "scientific" form of knowing—that is, to the possession of *epistēmē*, scientific knowledge. This is the only instance of any form of *epistamai* or *epistēmē* in the *Letters* outside of Letter Seven, where I have marked their appearance in footnotes.

[117] Or "I expect."

[118] Occupation translates *diatribēn*; see n xxxx above [309a].

[119] Some MSS. have "Using him for this".

[120] Lit. "as is likely" (*hōs eoike*).

would have done the same thing also with his counsel to me. For if we should have seemed to be in an incurable state, he would have bid us a great farewell and [322c] distanced himself from counsel concerning me and my things." Good luck.[121]

[121] On the valediction "Good luck" (*eutuchē*), see n xxxx above [321c].

Letter Six

Plato to Hermias, and Erastus, and Coriscus:[122] Do Well!

Some one of the gods appears to me to be kindly and sufficiently preparing good fortune for you [pl.], if you [pl.] should accept it well. For you [pl.] dwell as neighbors to yourselves and have such need as to benefit each other in the [322d] greatest things. For to Hermias, neither from a multitude of horses, nor from another military alliance, nor even from the further accrual of gold could a greater power come to be in all things than from friends who are steadfast and who have healthy character. As for Erastus and Coriscus, in addition to this beautiful wisdom of the Forms,[123] I claim, "even though [I am] old,"[124] that they have need of wisdom that guards against the wicked and unjust [322e] and of a certain defensive power. For they are inexperienced on account

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[122] Hermias ruled the Ionian city of Atarneus in the mid-fourth century BC. He is often said first to have been the eunuch or the slave of Eubulus, a banker who came to rule Atarneus and left the throne to him. Contrary to the testimony of this letter (322e6-3a1), Strabo (64/3 BC – 24 AD) records the story that Hermias was a pupil of both Plato and Aristotle in Athens before inheriting the rule of Atarneus around 351 BC (*Geographica* 13.1.57). His relationship to Aristotle, who spent time in his court after Plato died, appears to have been the more extensive: Aristotle is said to have married Hermias' daughter, and it was through Aristotle that Hermias developed his fateful political ties to Phillip II of Macedon (Diogenes Laertius, 5.1.3). Very little is known about Erastus and Coriscus outside of the *Letters*. They are said to have been from Scepsis, not far from Atarneus; Diogenes Laertius lists them among Plato's students (3.46) and Strabo calls them "Socratics" (13.1.54). Coriscus happens to have been the father of Neleus, the infamous inheritor of Aristotle's literary estate from Theophrastus (Strabo, 13.1.54). Erastus is mentioned again in Letter Thirteen (362b2).

[123] A reference to Plato's famous metaphysical, ontological, and epistemological doctrine. The word for "Form" appears only once more in the *Letters*, and Plato there appears to use it in its more everyday sense (354c5). The long "philosophic digression" in Letter Seven, however, is usually taken to be a summary and explanation of this doctrine despite Plato's never using the word (341b3-345c3).

[124] Post 1930 has proposed that this is a quotation from Sophocles' lost *Thyestes*, of which the relevant fragment (Nauck fr. 239) has been preserved by Stobaeus. The full fragment reads, "…even though [I am] old; but wont to accompany old age are mind and deliberation as to what is needed."

of having spent[125] a long part of their life with us who are measured and not bad. This is why I said [they have] need of these things in addition,[126] lest they be compelled to be careless of the true wisdom[127] in order to take care over the human and compulsory [wisdom] more than they need to. But Hermias appears to me (so far as is possible [323a] without my yet having met him)[128] to have acquired this very power both by nature and, through experience, by art.

What, then, am I saying? To you, Hermias, I—having had more experience[129] with Erastus and Coriscus than you have—claim, declare,[130] and bear witness that you will not easily find more trustworthy characters than these neighbors.[131] I counsel [you] to hold fast to these men in every just way, holding [this] to be no peripheral issue. To Coriscus and Erastus, I am counseling [that you] hold fast to Hermias in turn and [that you] attempt by this mutual [323b] holding of one another to come to be in a single plait of friendship. But if anyone among you should at some point think to dissolve this—for the human is not altogether steadfast—send [pl.] to me and mine here a letter of accusation.[132] For I suppose

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[125] "Having spent" translates *diatetriphenai*, the perfect infinitive of *diatribein*, "to spend time." See n xxxx above [309a].

[126] This reading appears in the text of some MSS, and as a marginal correction in the best ones. The main text of the best MSS have instead only "This is why I spoke".

[127] Or "wisdom of the truth."

[128] The word for "having met" (*sungegonoti*) is literally "having come to be together with." It might mean instead something like "having spent time in conversation with."

[129] The word translated "having had experience with" is *pepeiramenos*, the same verb I have elsewhere translated "attempt." It may therefore also be translated "having made trial of" in this case. But the connection should also be noted to the words like *empeiros* ("experienced") and *apeiria* ("inexperience") appearing elsewhere, including in this letter.

[130] Or "reveal," as of a secret (*mēnuō*).

[131] Or "among [your] neighbors."

[132] In this instance, the phrase "send a letter" does not translate the single verb *epistellete*, but rather the two word phrase *pempete epistolēn*. See n xxxx above [313c].

that, both by justice and by awe,[133] the speeches coming from us here, unless the dissolution happens to have been great, would, more than any incantation, naturally implant in [you][134] and bind [you] together again in the [323c] friendship and community that was there beforehand; and with respect to this [friendship and community], whenever we and you [pl] all shall philosophize[135] insofar as we are capable and as is appropriate to each of us, the authoritative oracles just now delivered will come to be. But if we should not do these things—I will not speak to this. For I deliver a good prophesy,[136] and I claim that we will do all these good things if a god should will it.

All of you, being three, ought to read this letter—most of all as a group, but otherwise in twos—in common as often as can possibly be, and use[137]

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[133] "Justice" (*dikē*) could also be "just penalty." "Awe" translates *aidōs*, "that feeling of reverence or shame which restrains men from wrong" (Evelyn-White 1914, 17 n 2). Both *Dikē* and *Aidōs* were often deified as goddesses; in Plato's *Laws*, the Athenian Stranger claims that *Dikē* is rightly said to be the virgin daughter of *Aidōs* (943e1-2). This seems to have been an intentional twist on a line from Hesiod: "*Dikē* was born the virgin daughter of Zeus, who is renowned and reverenced (*aidoiē*) by the gods who hold Olympus" (*Works and Days* 256-7).

[134] The main text in all the MSS, which I follow, has *emphusai*, "would naturally implant." Most editors and translators, however, have followed the suggestion of scribes who indicate that the word should be *sumphusai* "would naturally unite" or "would naturally heal [as a wound]." On this reading, the line would run something like, "…would, more than any incantation, naturally unite [you] and bind [you] together again…" or perhaps "…would, more than any incantation, naturally heal [your wound] and bind [you] together again…". Cf. n xxxx [313d] above on my translation of words related to *phusis*, "nature."

[135] Harward notes that "ἥν may be taken as internal accus. with φιλοσοφῶμεν," explaining that "philosophy for Plato was a matter of conduct, as well as of intellect" (187 n4). This strange but possible reading would suggest that the activity of philosophy would be directly productive of the friendship and community to which Plato refers. The sense would be something like, "whenever we and you [pl.] all shall philosophize this [friendship and community into existence]."

[136] The phrase "I deliver a prophesy" here translates *phēmēn manteuomai*. The former word refers to the utterance delivered through divine inspiration, and is related to the word for "claim" that follows (*phēmi*). The latter gives the action of prophecy and can also mean "I divine"; see n xxxx above [311d].

[137] Or perhaps "consult," in the sense of consulting an oracle (*chrēsthai*).

it as a compact [323d] and authoritative law, which is just, swearing with great seriousness that is not unmusical,[138] and with the playfulness that is a sister of seriousness, and swearing by the god who is leader of all things that are and will be, a lordly[139] father of the leader and cause, whom, if we really philosophize, we all shall know as clearly as is within the power of happy human beings.

[138] "Unmusical" translates *amousōi*, literally "without the muses," and so can mean more generally "tasteless," "uncultured," or "unrefined."

[139] Or "authoritative."

Letter Seven

Plato to the intimates[140] and companions of Dion: Do well!

You [pl] sent a letter [saying] I need to believe that your [pl] intention[141] is the same as that which Dion also had, and you [pl] directed [324a] me moreover to join in common [with you], insofar as I'm able, by deed and by word. If you [pl] have the same opinion and desire as him, I grant that I will join in common [with you]; otherwise, to deliberate at great length.[142] But what his intention and desire were I could say as someone who is hardly conjecturing but rather knows clearly. For, when I arrived at Syracuse in the beginning, I was about forty years old and Dion was at the age at which Hipparinus[143] is now, and the opinion of which he then

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[140] I have tried consistently to translate the word *oikeioi* with "intimates." The word literally refers to ones with whom one shares a household, and thus often to family members (as it does sometimes in the *Letters*). However, Plato clearly uses the word in some cases to refer to a broader class of very close relationships (e.g., 313d2).

[141] "Intention" translates the important word *dianoian*. See n xxxx above [315d].

[142] Lit. "often."

[143] Three men in the Syracusan royal family were named Hipparinus: Dion's father, Dion's son, and Dion's nephew. There has been considerable debate as to which of the latter two men Plato is referring to here; see, e.g., Nails 2002, 166-8; Burnyeat and Frede 2015, 187-8 n143; Harward 1932, 195-6; Post 1930; Brisson 1993, 211-2 n7; Souillhé 2003, xlv-xlvii. Of the two candidates, only Dion's son would have been of such an age as to match Plato's description (around twenty years old in about 354 BC). The primary difficulty is that this Hipparinus is said by Plutarch (*Dion* 55.2) and Nepos (*Dion* 6) to have committed suicide shortly before Dion himself was assassinated, in which case he could never have been alive at the time of the writing of Letter Seven. Dion's nephew was a more generally noteworthy historical figure. This Hipparinus was the son of Dionysius the Elder and went on himself to become the leader of Dion's party, winning back rule over Syracuse from Dion's murderer Callippus and ruling the city as a tyrant himself for two years (Diodorus Siculus, 16.36). But he was some ten years too old to match Plato's description here. Those who say that Plato could never have been ignorant either of the suicide of Dion's son or of the age of Dion's nephew allege that the reference to Hipparinus at 324a gives away the author of Letter Seven as a forger—some adding that neither Hipparinus was deserving of the hopeful description at 324b3-4. Others, defending the letter's authenticity, have thought it plausible either that Plato might not have received word of the younger Hipparinus's untimely death or that he might have become confused as to the elder Hipparinus's age. Of course, it may also be that the confusion in chronology lies with the

took hold [324b] was the same one he continued holding to the end: he supposed that the Syracusans needed to be free and dwelling under the best laws. So it will be in no way amazing if some one of the gods should make this man too [i.e., Hipparinus] come to be of the same mind with the other's opinion about their regime. As for the way of [the opinion's] coming to be, it is not unworthy of being heard for him who is young and him who is not young, and I will attempt to go through it for you [pl] from the beginning; for now is a propitious moment.

When I was young, I experienced the same thing as many do: I supposed that, as soon as I should become my own master,[144] I would [324c] go straightaway to the common things of the city. And certain strokes of fortune from among the affairs of the city befell me, such as the following. For the regime of that time being reviled by many, there came to be a change, and from the change fifty-one men came to the fore as rulers, eleven in the town and ten in the Piraeus—each of these [was to manage] as many things as needed to be managed concerning the agora and the things in the towns[145]—and they set up thirty autocratic [324d] rulers over everything.[146] Some of these happened to be

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sources of Plutarch's and Nepos's biographies. Nor is it impossible, though I consider it unlikely, that Plato was intentionally feigning ignorance of the death of Dion's son. Letter Eight also appears to have been written under the impression that Dion's son was still alive (355e5).

[144] Lit. "authority."

[145] That is, economic and other administrative matters of daily business.

[146] Plato refers here to what is known as the regime of the Thirty Tyrants, which ruled Athens for eight months after its defeat in the Pelopponesian war in 404 BC. Plato's account of the Thirty here is unusual in several respects, beginning with his numbering them "fifty-one"; for parallels, see Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 35 and Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.3.54. Furthermore, Plato gives a deeply misleading account of the Thirty's rise to power by attributing it to a "change" (*metabolē*; see n xxxx below [325b]) in the previously "reviled" regime and not to the victorious Spartans' imposition upon their defeated foes (see Aristotle, *Ath. Const.* 34; cf. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.2.20, 23; 2.3.1-3, 11). The strangeness of this account has been noted by Richards 1911 (278-9).

intimates[147] and acquaintances of mine, and they straightaway called upon me as toward my own proper affairs. And what I experienced on account of youth was nothing amazing; for I supposed that they would manage the city, leading it from a certain unjust life to a just way, so that I was intently focusing my mind upon them as to what they would do. But then, seeing these men in a short time show the previous regime to have been golden—both in other matters and, especially, [when] they sent a man who was my friend, [the] elderly [324e] Socrates, whom I would scarcely be ashamed to say was the most just of those in that time, with some others, to carry off one of the citizens by force to be put to death, [325a] in order that he should participate in their affairs whether he should wish to or not; but he did not obey, but risked suffering everything rather than become a partner in their impious deeds[148]—seeing distinctly all these things and still others such as these that weren't slight, I was disgusted and I withdrew myself from the evils[149] of that time. It was not a long time [before] the [affairs] of the Thirty and the whole regime of that time fell, and once again, though more slowly, nevertheless the desire [325b] to be active in the common and political things began to draw me. Well, many things were happening in these times too, troubled as they were, with which one would be disgusted, and it was in no way anything amazing that, in times of change, some came to take great vengeance[150] on some of their enemies; yet those who then returned [from exile] employed great decency indeed. But by some fortune, some of those in power again brought this same companion of

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[147] Or "relatives"; see n xxxx above [323d]

[148] A reference to the episode concerning Leon of Salamis known to us especially from Plato's *Apology of Socrates* 32c3-e1; cf. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.3.38-39.

[149] It is in fact ambiguous whether Plato claims to have withdrawn himself from "evil" or "bad" *things* and *events*, or rather from "evil" or "bad" *men* (*tōn kakōn*).

[150] Or "impose great penalties."

ours, Socrates, into court, laying [325c] a most impious accusation [against him] and one that was proper least of all with respect to Socrates; for some brought him in on grounds of a lack of pious veneration,[151] and others condemned and killed him who had formerly not been willing to participate in the impious arrest of one of the friends of those in exile at the very time when they themselves were in exile and suffering bad fortune.

I was examining both these things and the human beings who were doing the political things, and also the laws and customs, and the more I carefully examined and advanced in age, the more difficult it appeared to me to be to manage the political things correctly. [325d] For one is not able to act without men who are friends and faithful companions—and these were not already there and easy to find, for our city was no longer being managed according to the manners[152] and practices of our fathers, and it was impossible to acquire new and different [friends and companions] with any ease—and both the written laws and the customs were being corrupted and increasing to such an amazing degree that, [325e] while at first I had been full of a great impulse toward doing the common things, when I looked at these things and saw them being borne about everywhere in every way, I ended up becoming dizzy; and while I did not leave off with respect to examining in what way something better might ever come to be, both concerning these very things and moreover [326a] concerning the whole regime, yet with respect to acting I was always waiting for propitious moments, and ended up thinking, concerning all of today's cities, that all of them are being governed badly—for what is of their laws will be in a nearly incurable state without some amazing preparation together with fortune—and I

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[151] "Lack of pious veneration" translates the single word *asebē*; see n xxxx above [311e].

[152] Or "characters" (*ēthesin*); see n xxxx above [316a].

was compelled to say, praising correct philosophy, that on the basis of this [i.e., correct philosophy] it is possible to see distinctly both the just political things and all [the just things] in private matters; therefore [326b] the human races[153] will not cease from evils until either the race of those philosophizing (correctly and truly, that is) should come into the positions of political rule, or that of those who are in power in the cities will, by some divine fate, really philosophize.[154]

Having this intention, I went to Italy and Sicily—when I arrived the first [time]. But when I got there, the life that is there called happy, one full of Italiote[155] and Syracusan tables,[156] was agreeable to me in no way or manner—to live, stuffing oneself twice a day, never going to bed alone at night, and all the practices that accompany this life; for [326c] neither could anyone of the human beings under heaven, practicing these customs from youth, ever be capable of becoming practically wise[157]—there will be no blending by nature that is so amazing—nor would one ever go on to become moderate, and the same argument would hold, moreover, for the rest of virtue, and no city could be at peace under any laws whatsoever where men suppose that they need to spend away [326d] everything on excesses, and holding further that they need to become idle in everything except for feasts, drinking-bouts, and the

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[153] *Genos* is considerably broader than the word "race" by which I have translated it here and throughout. While it can have the meaning of "family" or "tribe," it is evident enough even in this passage that it can also mean merely a "class" or "group," as in the English "genus." "Classes" might well be the best translation here, if it were not apt to be misconstrued as indicating socio-political class.

[154] This whole passage is an unmistakable reference to, and must be carefully compared with, *Republic* 473c11-e2; see also 499a11-d6.

[155] Italiotes were the Greek inhabitants of Italy.

[156] Morrow *ad loc.* notes that "Syracusan tables were proverbial," and refers to Plato, *Republic* 404d as well as Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 527d.

[157] *Phronimos*; see n xxxx above [310e].

serious exertions[158] of sexual activities;[159] and it is by necessity that these cities never cease changing—tyrannies, oligarchies, and democracies—[160] and those in power in them won't put up with hearing the name of a regime of justice and equality under the law.

Having these things in mind,[161] in addition to those from before, I crossed into Syracuse, [326e] perhaps by fortune, but it's likely that, by some contrivance of the mightier ones,[162] a beginning was then launched of the problems that have now come to be concerning Dion and of those concerning the Syracusans—and, it is to be feared, of still more, unless you would now obey my counsel with respect to the second [of these].

In what way, then, do I mean that [327a] a beginning of everything came to be from the time of my arrival in Sicily? I'm afraid that, having come to be together with Dion when he was young, revealing to him through speeches the things that seemed to me to be best for human beings and counseling him to do them, I was ignorant that I, without noticing myself, was in a certain way contriving what would come to be a dissolution of a tyranny. For Dion being indeed very much a good learner, about other things too but especially the speeches that were then spoken by me,[163] he hearkened keenly [327b] and intently such as none

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[158] Lit. "enduring toil" (*diaponoumenas*).

[159] Lit. "of Aphroditean things" (*aphrodisiōn*).

[160] The phrase might also mean, "never cease changing between tyranny, democracy, and oligarchy"

[161] The word for "having in mind" is *dianooumenos*, which I have tried to render "intending" as much as possible. See n xxxx above [315d]. Plato seems to refer back in this sentence to the *dianoia*, "intention," he had in mind in travelling to Sicily in the first place at 326d.

[162] The gender of *tōn kreittonōn* is ambiguous. It could refer to "the mightier *people*" or "*gods,*" or if it is neuter, to "the mightier *things*."

[163] The reading of one of the two best MSS. The other reads, "the speeches that then came into being from me."

of the young I have ever met[164] and was willing to live the rest of his life in a manner surpassing the many Italiotes and Siciliotes,[165] having come to cherish virtue more than pleasure and the rest of luxury; from which point he lived until the death of Dionysius in a manner was that rather aggravating to those living according to what is lawful in a tyranny.

After this, he had in mind that this intention,[166] of which he himself took hold from correct speeches, would never have come to be in him alone, [327c] but he apprehended that he saw it coming to be in others too—not in many, but it was coming to be in some, and he held that even Dionysius could perhaps become one of these with the assistance of gods, and if such a thing should in turn come to pass, that both his life and that of the other Syracusans would turn out to become one of indomitable[167] bliss. In addition to these things, he supposed that I needed to come by every means to Syracuse as quickly as possible [327d] as a partner in these things, remembering how easily his and my intercourse had succeeded in bringing him to a desire for the noblest and best[168] life; and if he could now accomplish in Dionysius what he was undertaking, he had great

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[164] "Met" translates *prosetuxon*, which is related to *tuchē*, "fortune"; see n xxxx above [313b].

[165] That is, the Greek inhabitants of Italy and Sicily, as noted above (nn xxxx [319e] and xxxx [326b])

[166] "He had in mind" and "intention" translate the related words *dianoēthē* and *dianoian*; see n xxxx above [315d].

[167] "[I]ndomitable" translates *amēchanon*, which is related to the word I have usually translated by a form of the word "contrive." The literal sense is something like, "against which no contrivance could prevail."

[168] "Noblest and best" translates *kallistou te kai agathou*, the superlative form of *kalos te kai agathos* (see n xxxx above [311d] on the meaning of *kalos*). The contracted form *kalos k'agathos* is a formula that refers to the morally and civically upstanding member of the Greek political community; it is often translated "gentleman." There is only one other use of this phrase in the *Letters*, at 359b7-8. The phrase is important in Platonic philosophy generally; see, e.g., *Apology of Socrates* 21d1-8 in context as well as *Alcibiades* 114e7-6b1.

hopes of establishing, without slaughters, deaths, and the evils that have now come to be, a happy and true[169] life throughout the whole land.

Rightly intending these things, Dion persuaded Dionysius to send for me, and he himself sent to me begging that I come as quickly as possible by [327e] every means, before some others encountered[170] Dionysius and turned him away to a life other than the best one. And he begged by saying the following things, though speaking at even greater length: "What propitious moments are we waiting for," he said, "greater than those that have now come to be at hand by some divine fortune?" He went through the [imperial] rule over Italy and Sicily [328a] and his power in it, and Dionysius's youth and desire for philosophy and education, saying that he was intent [in this], that his nephews[171] and intimates[172] would easily be called toward the reason and life of which I am always speaking and most sufficient to join in calling Dionysius [toward the same], so that, now if ever, there was every hope for the culmination of philosophers and rulers of great cities turning out to be the same.

[328b] These and other such encouragements were very numerous, but as for my own opinion, on one hand I was fearful as to the way in which [things] would ever come to be concerning the young—for the desires of such as they are flighty and are often borne into their opposites—but on the other hand I knew,[173] concerning the character of Dion's soul, that it

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[169] Or "truthful"; *alēthinon*.

[170] *Entuxontas*; see n xxxx above [313b].

[171] "[T]he masculine noun [*adelphidous*] may well be generic, so that it includes Dion's nieces" (Burnyeat and Frede 2015, 146 n25).

[172] Or perhaps "relations" (*oikeious*); see n xxxx above [323d].

[173] Or "I knew scientifically" (*ēpistamēn*); see n xxxx above [321e].

was by nature weighty[174] and that it had already reached its middle age. Hence, though I was examining and waffling as to whether I would have to go and to hearken or else how [I should act], nevertheless the need [for me to go] prevailed[175]—if ever someone was going to undertake to bring these [328c] intentions concerning both laws and regime[176] to a culmination, it needed to be attempted also now; for by sufficiently persuading just one, I would be the accomplisher of all good things.

It was with this intention and daring that I set out from home, not in the way that some were opining, but ashamed of myself in the highest degree lest I should ever seem to myself to be altogether, solely, and artlessly a certain speech,[177] voluntarily taking hold of not one deed ever, and to be in danger of betraying, in the first place, [328d] the guest-friendship and companionship of Dion, who had really come to be in no small dangers. Whether indeed he should suffer something, or whether, having been thrown out by Dionysius and his other enemies, he should come to us in exile and ask, "Plato, I have come to you as an exile, not needing hoplites,[178] nor having come to be in need of cavalrymen for defense

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[174] "Weighty" is a literal translation of *embrithes*. In this context, it may connote gravitas or stability.

[175] There is a connection, difficult to render in consistent idiomatic English, between the words I have translated "waffling" and "prevailed" in this sentence. The former, *distazonti* ("doubting," "hesitating"), is literally a "dripping" on both sides of something (*dis-* = "both" + *stazein* = "to drip, trickle"). The latter, *errepse* ("inclined," "preponderated"), has as its primary meaning "tipped the scale." Plato's image, then, is of a balance in which his two options were being weighed; initially, his considerations gave equal weight to each side, but finally the scale was tipped in favor of departure to Syracuse.

[176] It should be noted that "*Laws*" and "*Regime*" (usually translated "*Republic*") are the titles of Plato's two longest books and the two that most explicitly and extensively describe purportedly ideal or philosophically informed political arrangements.

[177] "Speech" translates *logos*, which could also be rendered "argument" or "reason." Its contrast in this sentence with "deed" (*ergou*) is a common one. In idiomatic English, we might say "all talk and no action."

[178] Heavy-armed foot soldiers, who would compose the majority of a typical polis's soldiery.

against enemies, but of speeches and persuasions, by means of which, as I myself have known,[179] you most of all are capable on every occasion of setting up young human beings in friendship and companionship with each other by turning them toward the good things and the just things; [328e] it is for a lack of these things on your part that I am here now, having left Syracuse behind. And yet what pertains to me carries relatively little reproach for you; but philosophy, which you always extol and which you claim is held in dishonor by the rest of human beings—how has it not been betrayed at this point, together with me, to whatever extent a part of what has come to pass was up to you? [329a] And if we happened to be dwelling in Megara,[180] surely you would have come to my aid for the sake of the things for which I was calling upon you, or else you would hold yourself to be pettiest of all; but as it is, do you suppose that by blaming the length of the journey and the magnitude of the sailing and of the toil you will ever escape a reputation for badness? Far from it,[181] indeed."—if these things had been said, what decorous answer would I have to them? There isn't [one].

But I went, in accordance with reason and in justice [329b] as much as is possible for a human being, and because of such things I left behind my occupations,[182] which were not indecorous, [to go live] under a tyranny that didn't seem to be fitting with respect to my things[183] or to me.

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[179] Or "as I myself have known scientifically" (*ēpistamēn*); see n xxxx above [321e].

[180] A city some twenty-five miles from Athens.

[181] Lit. "there would be need of much." The main verb, *deēsei*, is related to the words for "need" and "lack" that appear in this same passage.

[182] "Occupations" translates the word *diatribas*; see n xxxx above [309a]

[183] The best MSS include the word *logois* in the margins here, suggesting the reading "didn't seem to be fitting with respect to my speeches or to me." But it is not clear whether the marginal note indicates a preferable reading from other MSS since lost or merely a later scribe or editor's explanatory gloss on the text.

When I went,[184] I both freed[185] myself from Zeus Xenios[186] and rendered the philosopher's part unimpeachable—and it would have come to be a matter of reproach had I participated in shamefulness and badness by in a way becoming soft and being cowardly.

But when I went (for there is no need to go on at length) I found everything around Dionysius full of strife and slanders [329c] concerning Dion in relation to the tyranny. To be sure, I was defending [him] as much as I was capable, though I was able to do only small things, but in about the fourth month, Dionysius, accusing Dion of plotting against the tyranny, put him in a small boat and cast him out in dishonor.

Indeed, after this we friends of Dion were all afraid lest [Dionysius] should avenge himself upon someone by accusing him of being an accomplice[187] in Dion's plot; and a certain speech concerning me even went around among the Syracusans to the effect that I had been put to death by Dionysius on the grounds that I was to blame for all the things that had [329d] happened up to that point. But he, perceiving that we all were disposed this way and fearing lest something greater should come to be from our fears, he began to take back up a friendly manner with everyone; and with respect to me in particular, he reassured me, directed me to take heart, and begged me in every way to stay; for my fleeing from him would in no way come to be beautiful for him, but rather my staying, wherefore he pretended to beg very intently indeed. But we know that the begging of tyrants is mixed with compulsions, [329e] and

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[184] Or, "By going..."

[185] The word for "I freed," *ēleutherōsa*, can bear the sense "freed from blame" and hence "acquitted," or indeed "freed from debt."

[186] "Xenios" is an epithet of Zeus indicating his responsibility for overseeing, and punishing transgressions of, the obligations of *xenia*, "guest-friendship"; see n xxxx above [316c].

[187] Lit. "jointly blameworthy," (*sunaitios*). The word has the same root meaning "blame" as the word translated "accusing" in this sentence and above at 329c; cf. n xxxx above [312e].

he contrived to prevent my sailing away by bringing me into an acropolis and settling me whence not a single ship captain would any longer lead me out—not that Dionysius was [actively] preventing this; rather, not unless [Dionysius] himself should give the order[188] [explicitly] by sending someone to direct [a ship's captain] to lead me out [would anyone do so]—nor was there a merchant, nor a single one of the rulers at the land's exits, who, if they knew that I was leaving alone, wouldn't have seized me straight away and led me back again to Dionysius, especially since it had already been proclaimed at some point, contrary to [330a] before, that Dionysius was amazingly fond of Plato.

So then, what indeed was the state of things? For one needs to tell the truth. While he grew ever more fond of me as time went on during his intercourse with my way and character, he also wished for me to praise him more than [I praised] Dion and to hold him to be an exceptional friend more than [I did Dion], and he had an amazing love of victory with regard to such a thing. But as for the way in which it might have come to be that way (if indeed it was to come to be that way) most beautifully—[330b] [that is,] in learning from and listening to speeches concerning philosophy, to become familiar[189] with me and come to be together with me—he shrank from it, fearing, on account of the slanderers' speeches, lest he should become ensnared in some way and Dion be the accomplisher of everything. But I endured everything, guarding the first intention with which I had arrived in case he should somehow come to a desire for the life of philosophy; but he, resisting, won out.

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[188] A rare case in which the verb *epistellein*, which I usually render with the phrase "to send a letter," means instead "to give an order"; see n xxxx above [313c]. Of course, it is possible even here that Plato is describing Dionysius sending his messenger with a written letter.

[189] *Oikeiousthai* might be translated "become an intimate of," to render the word's relationship to *oikeios*, which I have translated as "intimate"; see n xxxx above [323e].

And so, the time of my first visit [330c] and occupation[190] in Sicily turned out to come to be [the way it did] because of all these things. After this I voyaged [back], and returned when Dionysius sent for me in all seriousness. As to how many things I did and the things for the sake of which I did them, that they were appropriate and just: after having first counseled you [pl] with respect to what [you] ought to do on the basis of the things that have now happened, I will later thoroughly go through what concerns these things for the sake of those repeatedly asking what indeed I was wishing when I went the second time, so that peripheral issues do not turn out to be spoken of by me as [though they were the main] issues.

I myself, then, mean the following things. One who is counseling a sick man adhering to a regimen[191] [330d] that is depraved with respect to health ought first to change the [sick man's way of] life into something else. If he is willing to obey, at that point [must the counselor] recommend other things too; but if he is not willing, I would hold one who flees from counseling such [a man] to be both a man and a doctor, and one who remains to be the opposite: unmanly[192] and artless. It is indeed the same with respect to a city as well, whether it should have one sovereign or more:[193] if, while duly proceeding on the right path, he

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[190] *Diatribēs*; see n xxxx above [309a].

[191] "Adhering to a regimen" translates *diaitan diaitōmenōi*. The root *diait-* is the source of the English "diet," and the noun *diaita* can in fact mean this. But it generally has the broader sense of one's daily manner of living, and so can refer to character-forming moral habits as well as to nutrition and exercise. I have tried to use "regimen" everywhere a form of this word appears, indicating deviations from this practice in footnotes. It should be stressed that there is no connection in the Greek between the words I have rendered "regimen" (*diaitan*) and "regime" (*politeia*).

[192] As the Greek word for manly (*andreion*) generally means "courageous," so this antonym (*anandron*) may also mean "cowardly."

[193] Throughout the following passage, Plato seems to shift between referring to the one needing counsel in the singular and the plural.

should seek counsel regarding something advantageous[194] for the regime,[195] [330e] then it belongs to one with intelligence[196] to counsel such as these; but as for those who are deviating[197] altogether from the correct regime and are in no way willing to go in its tracks, declaring beforehand to the counselor that he is to let the regime be and not [331a] to change[198] it, and that he will be put to death if he should change it—[suppose] they should direct their servants to give counsel, with respect to [the objects of] their wishes and desires, as to the way in which they would most easily and most quickly come to be for all time, I would hold the one who remains [to give] such counsels to be unmanly, and the one who does not remain to be a man.

This is the intention I hold whenever someone should seek counsel from me concerning any of the important[199] things in his life, such as the acquisition of money [331b] or the care of body or soul; if he should seem to me to be living daily in a certain way or to be willing to obey once I have counseled him concerning those things about which he is consulting in common [with me], I eagerly give counsel and do not stop at the mere discharge of duty.[200] But if he does not seek counsel from

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[194] The word here is *prosphorōn*, which shares its root with the word I usually translate "advantageous" (*sumphoron*) but bears a different prefix. If there is any difference in meaning, the word Plato employs here is limited somewhat more narrowly to "advantageous" in the sense of "serviceable" or "useful."

[195] A variant reading in the MSS., differing by only one letter and accepted by several editors and translators, has the word "proceeding" in the feminine to as to accord with "regime" rather than "sovereign." The clause then would read, "if, the regime proceeding duly on the right path, he should seek counsel regarding something advantageous…"

[196] Lit. "one having a mind."

[197] Lit. "walking outside."

[198] Lit. "move," here and in the next clause.

[199] Lit. "great."

[200] "Discharge of duty" translates the participle *aphosiōsamenos*, the literal meaning of which refers to religious purification from pollution. The metaphorical meaning, "to do something in a

me at all, or if it is clear that he will in no way obey me when I do counsel him, I will not go to counsel such a one on my own initiative, nor will I use force, even if he should be my own son. Now, to a slave I would give counsel and, if he were unwilling at least, I would use force [upon him]; [331c] but I hold it not to be pious to use force upon a father or a mother unless they are out of their senses[201] due to illness; but if they are living a certain life that has been set up as agreeable to them but not to me, I do not make myself hateful [to them] by admonishing in vain, nor do I serve them by flattering, furnishing fulfillments of desires which, if I myself were fond of them, I would not be willing to live.

Indeed, one who is in his senses ought to live intending this same thing concerning his city as well: He should speak (if [his city] does not [331d] appear to him to be nobly governed) if he is neither going to be talking in vain nor to be put to death for speaking; but he should not bring force against a fatherland to produce a change of regime when it is not possible for it to come to be the best without exile and slaughter of men; rather, he should keep quiet and pray for the good things for both himself and his city.

I would counsel you [pl.], then, in the same way as I, with Dion, counseled Dionysius too: first, to live each day so as to be as self-controlled as possible, [331e] and to acquire faithful friends and companions so as not to suffer the very things his father [suffered], who took many and great Sicilian cities that had been pillaged by barbarians but, having recolonized them, was not able to set up in each of them faithful[202] regimes of men who were his companions, neither [332a]

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perfunctory way" may have evolved from use of the word in reference to the routine performance of rituals.

[201] *Paraphrosunēs echomenous*; cf. n xxxx above [316d].

[202] The word "faithful" (*pistas*) does not appear in the main body of the text of the two best MSS. It is, however, included as a marginal emendation in both, and in the text itself in later MSS.

foreigners from anywhere else, nor his brothers, whom he himself had raised when they were younger, and whom he had made from private [citizens] into rulers and from poor [men] into surpassingly rich ones. Not one of these was he able successfully to make into a partner in his rule, whether by persuasion, teaching, benefactions, or ties of kinship. Rather, he came to be seven times pettier than Darius, who, trusting neither in [his] brothers nor anyone raised by him but only in [his] partners in the subduing of the Mede [332b] and eunuch, apportioned [among them] seven regions, each greater than all of Sicily, made use of [them as] faithful partners who made attempts neither upon him nor upon each other, and gave demonstration of a model of what sort the good lawgiver and king ought to become; for by establishing laws, he has preserved the Persian empire even up to the present day.[203]

In addition to these things, moreover, the Athenians, having taken over many Greek cities that they had not colonized themselves, which had been invaded by barbarians but were still inhabited, nevertheless [332c] kept guard over their empire for seventy years by having acquired men who were friends in each of the cities.[204] But Dionysius, having gathered all of Sicily in a single city, wisely trusting no one, with difficulty saved

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[203] Darius the Great ruled the Persian Empire from 522 BC until his death in 486 BC. He reorganized and centralized the empire's administration and conducted several successful military campaigns, overseeing the expansion of the Persian Empire to the peak of its power and extent, though his attempted conquest of Greece was notably halted at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC. The "Mede and eunuch" to whom Plato refers would be the ruler of the Persian Empire preceding Darius, whose identity is a matter of long-standing debate. The man in question claimed to be Bardiya (Smerdis in Greek histories), son of Cyrus and legitimate heir to the throne. Darius and his six accomplices assassinated him, claiming he was a Median imposter named Gaumata. In the version told by Herodotus, the pretender is discovered by his lack of ears; Plato seems to be the only one to suggest he was a eunuch (a detail not compatible with Herodotus's account). Yet Plato makes the same claim even more clearly at *Laws* 695b2-c4; cf. that passage (in the context of the Athenian Stranger's condensed history of the Persian empire; 693d-6a, 697c-8a, 698c-9d) with Herodotus 3.28-30 and 61 ff.

[204] According to Harward, "the 'seventy years' describes roughly the period 478-404 B.C." (203 n 43), i.e., from the formation of the Delian league to Athens' defeat in the Peloponnesian War.

himself; for he was poor in men who were friends and faithful—and there is no greater sign of virtue and vice than this, whether one is devoid of such men or not.

Indeed, Dion and I together counseled these things to Dionysius too, since what came to him from his father [332d] had turned out to be such that he had come to be unacquainted with education and unacquainted with the proper associations:[205] first . . . ,[206] and then, having set out in this way, to acquire other friends for himself from among his relatives[207] and also his agemates who were in accord with respect to virtue, but most of all himself with himself, for he had come to be amazingly in need of this. We were not saying it as clearly as this, for it was not safe, but we were speaking in riddles and contending by way of speeches that every man would thus save both himself and those of whom he would come to be a leader; [332e] but that by not turning himself in this direction, he would bring everything to the opposite culmination; and that by proceeding in the way we were saying and successfully making himself sensible and moderate,[208] if he should then resettle the ravaged

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[205] The word translated "associations" here and "intercourse" elsewhere (*sunousia*) is most literally a "being together;" in this instance, it should be noted that the word can have the specific meaning of "intercourse *with a teacher*" and thus "attendance at his teaching" (LSJ, s.v.).

[206] The word "first" (*prōton*) being followed immediately by the word "next" (*epeita*) in the best MS, it has been suggested that there is a lacuna in the text here. Harward thinks this "can hardly be accidental," arguing that Plato likely originally wrote here a description of his "much criticized course of geometry," and at any rate that "[t]he simplest explanation is to suppose that the ultimate source of our text was a copy filed in the Academy, and that Plato struck out the missing words with a view to a revision which was never carried out" (204 n 45). Disagreements among the MSS. indicate *some* corruption of the text here; Souilhé and Novotny have proposed emending *epeita tautēi* to *epi tauta*, denying any further missing text. The sense would then be, "first, in service of these [goals], …".

[207] Or "intimates" (*oikeiōn*); see n xxxx above [324d]

[208] "[S]ensible and moderate" translates the phrase *emphrona te kai sōphrona*; the two words are closely related. The latter word refers to one of the four Platonic cardinal virtues; both share their root with *phronesis* "practical wisdom" or "prudence." See nn xxxx and xxxx above [310e

Sicilian cities and bind them together by laws and regimes so as to be intimates to him and to each other with a view to aiding [each other] against the barbarians, [333a] then would he make his father's empire not only twice [as great], but in fact many times [greater]. For if these should come to pass, he would then be ready to enslave the Carthaginians to a much greater extent than [that of] the slavery that had come to be for them in Gelon's time—as opposed to how it is now: his father ordered that a tribute be paid to the barbarians.[209]

These were the things said and recommended by us, the plotters against Dionysius according to such speeches as were spreading from everywhere and indeed which, by prevailing over Dionysius, cast Dion out and [333b] cast us down into [a state of] fear. But—that we may finish off in a short time [this account of] no few affairs—Dion, coming from the Peloponnese and Athens, admonished Dionysius by deed.[210] Next, at any rate, he twice set the city free and gave it back it to [the Syracusans]; the Syracusans then suffered the very same thing as Dionysius had when [Dion] undertook to educate him and raise him to be a king worthy of

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and 316d]. For the importance of this phrase to the sense of the whole letter, see Harward 1932 (204 n 45).

[209] Gelon was the first of an earlier series of Syracusan tyrants, ruling the city from 485 BC until his death in 478 BC. In 480 BC, he scored a decisive victory over Hamlicar I's Carthaginian army in the Battle of Himera, and granted peace on terms that included the payment of 2,000 talents of silver in reparations (Diodorus Siculus 11.26.2). But this proved to be only the beginning of centuries of wars over Sicily between Carthage and Syracuse. In 376 BC, Dionysius the Elder was defeated by Himilco Mago's forces at the Battle of Cronium, agreeing thereafter to pay 1,000 talents of silver as reparations (15.17.5).

[210] In 357 BC, the exiled Dion sailed to Sicily with a small mercenary force to depose Dionysius the Younger. His campaign was successful, but, as is implied by the next sentence, the exercise soon needed to be repeated. In the aftermath of his victory, Dion lost his power over the Syracusans to his military ally-turned-political rival Heraclides, whose was advancing more popular political proposals (see n xxxx above [318d]). Not long after leaving, however, the Syracusans found themselves once more in mortal peril and called for Dion to return and save them, which he did. See Plutarch, *Dion* 22 ff.

rule[211] so as to partner with him in all of life;[212] but [Dionysius] [listened][213] to the [333c] slanderers and to those who were saying that Dion, plotting at the tyranny, was doing everything he did at that time in order that [Dionysius], having had his mind beguiled by education, would not care about his rule[214] and turn it over to [Dion], while Dion usurped it and cast Dionysius out from the rule[215] by trickery. These things were victorious at that time; and also the second time, when they were being said among the Syracusans, by means of a victory that was very strange and shameful for those responsible for the victory. [333d] And those who are calling upon me in regard to the current matters ought to hear what sort of thing has happened.

I, an Athenian man, Dion's companion and his ally, came to the tyrant so that I could make friendship take the place of war [between them], but I was defeated in contending against the slanderers. Dionysius was [trying] to persuade me by means of honors and money to join with him as a witness and friend, with a view to lending seemliness to his casting out of Dion.[216] Of course, he altogether missed the mark in these things. But later, when Dion was coming back home, [333e] he brought with him a pair of brothers from Athens who had come to be [his friends][217] not from philosophy but from the promiscuous companionship belonging to

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[211] Or "worthy of empire".

[212] Or "in his whole life".

[213] The main verb in this sentence appears to be missing; Harward, whom I follow in supplying the word "listened," calls it a "violent anacolouthon of the nominativus pendens type" (205 n 49).

[214] Or "of his empire".

[215] Or "from the empire".

[216] "Seemliness" is *euprepeian*, related to the word generally translated "to be fitting" (*prepein*).

[217] The word for "friends" (*philō*) appears in the margins of the best MSS. and in the main text of some others.

most friends, which they work out through hosting someone as a guest-friend[218] or through initiation into the lesser and greater mysteries.[219] In this case, the pair of friends who together brought him back had come to be his companions both from these things and from [providing] the service of his return; but when they came [334a] to Sicily, since they perceived that Dion had been slandered among the Siceliotes[220] who had been freed by him to the effect that he was plotting to become tyrant, they not only betrayed their companion and guest-friend but came to be, as it were, perpetrators of his murder, themselves holding weapons in their hands as they stood by as auxiliaries for the murderers.[221] And I, for my part, neither pass over the shameful and impious thing, nor do I say anything [about it]—for to harp on[222] these things is an object of care for many others and it will be the object of their care [334b] in the time to come as well—but as for what is being said about [them as] Athenians, that they brought shame upon their city, I reject it. For I claim that he too is an Athenian who did not betray this very [Dion], though he stood

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[218] "Hosting someone as a guest-friend" translates *xenizein*; see n xxxx above [316c].

[219] [I]nitiation into the lesser and greater mysteries" translates the phrase *muein kai epopteuein*. These two verbs refer to different stages of initiation into the Greek mystery cults and particularly into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Initiation into the "Lesser Mysteries" (*muein*) granted one the status of *mustēs*; by initiation into the "Greater Mysteries" (*epopteuein*), one graduated to the status of *epoptēs*.

[220] The Greek inhabitants of Sicily.

[221] It is well-attested that Dion's murderer was Callippus, the Athenian who succeeded Dion as ruler of Syracuse and reigned there for just over a year (Diodorus Siculus 16.31.7; see also Plutarch, *Dion* 54 ff, Athenaeus 11.119, and Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1373a18-20). Nepos's biography of Dion appears to be the only source to identify a brother of Callipus, a man named Philostratus who played a peripheral role in the assassination plot. (Nepos also calls Callipus "Callicrates"; for an explanation, see Harward 205 n 52). Athenaeus (fl. ca. 300 AD), in his harangue against Plato, claims that Callippus had in fact been Plato's student at the Academy; Diogenes Laertius, writing around the same time, gives Callippus as the name of one of Plato's students (3.46). Isocrates also had a student by this name (*Antidosis* 93).

[222] "[T]o harp on" translates *humnein*, which was translated "to sing the praises of" at 311a; see n xxxx above.

to obtain money and many other honors. For he had become a friend [to Dion] not through vulgar friendship, but through partnership in liberal education. In this alone ought one who possesses a mind to trust, more than in kinship of souls and of bodies; thus, I do not deem [334c] the pair who killed Dion worthy of bringing reproach upon their city, as though they had ever come to be men of any account.

All these things have been said for the sake of the counsel to the Dionean friends and kin. Indeed, the counsel I give with respect to these things is the same counsel and the same speech that I am now saying for the third time, you [pl] being the third ones to whom [I am saying it]. Let not Sicily be enslaved to human masters, nor to another city, but, as my speech [has it] at least, to laws; for [otherwise] it is better neither for the enslavers nor the enslaved, [334d] not for them, nor for their children's children, nor for their descendants, but the attempt is altogether ruinous. It is the small and illiberal characters among souls who love[223] to snatch up such gains, but none who are knowers of the good and just[224] things, both divine and human, in the future and the present propitious moment.

I undertook first to persuade Dion of these things, second Dionysius, and third now you [pl.]. Now, then, be persuaded [pl.] by me, for the sake of[225] Zeus Third Savior,[226] looking to Dionysius and Dion, of whom he

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[223] The word for love here is *philei*, related to *philia*, "friendship," but not to *eros*, "passionate or romantic love."

[224] The word "just" (*dikaiōn*) is proposed in a sublinear emendation in one of the best MSS as well as in the main text of later MSS, and appears to be a necessary correction to *diōn* (as in the main text of the best MSS). Probably, the name "Dion" was miscopied from the next line. However, it could be that Plato actually wrote *diōn*, a rather poetic word for "divine" or "heavenly," which would also be a play on the name "Dion" (*Diōn*). Harward has noted that "[t]he language" in this section, beginning at 334c8, "becomes impressive, and poetical words and phrases appear" (206 n 57).

[225] Usually, "for the sake of" translates the preposition *heneka*; but here and in a few other places in Letters Seven and Eight, it translates instead the word *charin*. *Charis* means "grace," both as

who was not persuaded now lives but [334e] not nobly, while he who was persuaded has been nobly put to death; for he who aims for the noblest things for himself and his city suffers whatever he may suffer altogether rightly and nobly. For neither is anyone of us by nature deathless, nor would one become happy if one should somehow turn out to be, as it seems to the many. For no bad or good worthy of account [335a] belongs to the soulless, but this[227] will turn out to belong to each soul, either while it is with a body or after it has been separated. One really always ought to be persuaded by the ancient and sacred speeches, which indeed reveal to us that soul is deathless, that it has judges, and that it pays the greatest penalties[228] whenever one is rid of its body; wherefore ought one to believe that it is a smaller evil to suffer even the great sins and injustices than to do them; which [speeches][229] the lover of money, [335b] a poor man with respect to his soul, either doesn't hear, or, if he

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a human characteristic and in reference to the triad of goddesses known collectively as the Graces or Charites. In the accusative (*charin*), it was commonly used as a one-word formula meaning "in gratitude to" and hence generally "for the sake of." I have used the phrase "in gratitude to" wherever possible, and indicated in footnotes each time "for the sake of" is used to translate *charin* instead of *heneka*.

[226] The third in a series—for example, the third cup of wine—was often dedicated to *Zeus Sōtēr*, "Zeus Savior," which made for a superstitious belief in the propitious character of thirds (cf. "third time's the charm.") Plato makes this same reference again below (340a3-4) as well as elsewhere in his dialogues: *Charmides* 167a9, *Philebus* 66d4-5, *Republic* 583b2-3, and *Laws* 692a3; cf. *Laws* 960c8.

[227] It is unclear whether "this" refers to "bad and good" or to death. Two interpretations illustrate some possible meanings. "Good and bad, which are defined in the end by knowledge, can come about only in the soul, the seat of knowledge" (Brisson 221 n 81). "The thought seems to be as follows: Nothing that possesses a soul can avoid death; people are wrong therefore in thinking that we should be happy if we did not have to die, for that would mean that we were creatures without souls and hence incapable of experiencing either good or evil" (Morrow 229 n 34).

[228] The word for "penalties" here (*timōrias*) is elsewhere translated by the word "vengeance."

[229] Harward's suggestion as to the referent of this relative pronoun (*hōn*). As he puts it, "the irregularities of the language [in this passage] arise from the writer's struggles to give full expression to deep feelings" (206 n 60). Whatever the explanation, this is a long, winding sentence, the grammar and hence the sense of which can become difficult to follow.

does hear them, he ridicules [them], as he supposes [is fitting], and shamelessly[230] snatches from everywhere, like a wild beast, everything that he supposes will stuff him with eating, or drinking, or the furnishing of what concerns the servile and graceless pleasure incorrectly spoken of as Aphroditean,[231] since he is blind and does not see what the impious workings of his affairs[232] accompany, how great an evil is always together with each act of injustice, and that this [impiety] necessarily drags along with the doer of injustice as he goes about upon the earth and once he has returned below the earth [335c] on a journey that is altogether and in every way dishonored and wretched.

I, in saying these and other such things, was persuading Dion, and I would most justly be incensed by those who killed him, in a way most similar to [the way in which I am incensed] also by Dionysius. For both inflicted the greatest harms on me and, so to speak, on all other human beings, the former having destroyed[233] the one wishing to make use of justice, the latter, though he held the greatest power, having been in no way willing to make use of justice [335d] throughout his whole empire, in which, had philosophy and power really come to be in the same [person], shining out among all human beings, both Greek and barbarian, he would have sufficiently set down in everyone the true opinion that neither a city nor any man would ever become happy who did not lead his life with practical wisdom under justice, either possessing [this

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[230] The word for "shamelessly" is related not to *aischron* but to *aidōs*, "awe" or "reverence"; see n xxxx above [323b].

[231] I.e., sexual pleasure. Cf. 328b-d above.

[232] The best MS has the unusual word *harpagmatōn*, "acts of plunder," rather than *pragmatōn*, "affairs." The latter is the reading of all the next best MSS.

[233] "[D]estroyed" does not translate a form of *apollumi*, the word usually rendered by "destroy," but here of *diaphtheirō*; see n xxxx above [320e].

opinion][234] in himself or having been justly reared and educated in characters of pious ruling men.

[335e] These are the things that Dionysius harmed; to me, the other things would be small compared to these harms. But he who killed Dion does not know that he accomplished the same thing by [doing] this. For of Dion I know clearly, as much as a human being is able to affirm [anything] confidently about human beings, that if he had taken hold of the rule, he never would have turned toward another [336a] form[235] of rule than [the following]: first with regard to Syracuse, his fatherland, once he had delivered her from slavery and set [her] up [so as to be] free in form, after this he would by every contrivance have adorned the citizens with the proper and best laws; what he would have striven eagerly to do next after these things [would have been] to recolonize all Sicily and make it free from the barbarians, casting some out and subduing others more easily than Hiero;[236] and had these things in turn come to pass through a man who was [336b] just and courageous, moderate, and philosophic, the very same opinion concerning virtue would have come to be for the many that, if Dionysius had been persuaded, would have come to be among, so to speak, all human beings and saved them. But as it is, either, presumably, some daemon[237] or

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[234] No object whatsoever is given for the participle "possessing" (*kektēmenos*). The "true opinion" Plato has mentioned is one possibility; others are prudence, justice, or both.

[235] Here and later in the sentence, "form" translates not *eidos* or *idea*, the word for Plato's famous doctrine of the "Forms," but *schema*, literally "shape."

[236]See n xxxx above [311a]. Hiero repopulated the Sicilian cities of Naxos and Catana (cities founded by Chalcidean colonists; see Thucydides 6.3-4) with Dorian Greeks, sending the previous inhabitants to settle in Leontini (Diodorus Siculus 11.49); he won the Battle of Cumae (on the Italian mainland) against Tyrrhenian (Etruscan) forces in 474 BC (11.51).

[237] Daemons occupied a somewhat ill-defined place among the spiritual or supernatural beings of Greek religion: beneath the gods themselves, it would seem, but above the heroes (see, e.g., Plato, *Laws* 717b2-4). Hesiod says that those of the first and bygone "golden" race of human beings are now called "hallowed daemons upon the earth" (*daimones hagnoi epichthonioi*), and

some avenging spirit,[238] falling upon [them] by means of lawlessness, godlessness, and most of all reckless acts [born] of unlearnedness,[239] from which all evils to everyone take root, sprout up, and later culminate in the bitterest fruit for those who bear it. This [unlearnedness] overturned and destroyed everything [on] the second [occasion].

[336c] Well then, let us now speak well[240] for the sake of[241] an auspice [on] the third [occasion]. Nevertheless, I counsel you [pl.], his friends, to imitate Dion, both in his goodwill for his fatherland and in his

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that they are "noble (*esthloi*), deliverers from evil, guardians of mortal human beings" (WD 122-3). Plato's Socrates slightly misquotes these lines at *Cratylus* 397e12-8a2 on his way to suggesting that the word *daimōn* comes from *daēmōn*, "knowing, wise," that the poets claim *all* good men become daemons after death, and that every good man, i.e., every knowing and prudent man, is "daemonic" (398b5-c4). Cf. *Apology of Socrates* 27c10-d2 ff, where Socrates argues that daemons are either gods or children of gods, and *Symposium* 202d11 ff, where he claims to have been taught by Diotima that Love, being "between mortal and immortal" is "a great daemon," as "everything daemonic is between god and mortal," and that "all communion and conversation of gods with human beings" occurs through daemons. Of course, Socrates called his divine sign or voice, which famously claimed always to obey, a *daimonion*, "a daemonic thing." The word *daimōn* occurs nowhere else in the *Letters*; but note the etymological link to *eudaimonia*, "happiness," literally a human state governed or overseen by a "good daemon."

[238] "Avenging spirit" translates *alitērios*, which can simply mean "one who sins" or "one who is guilty," but in this context appears to carry the secondary meaning of a spirit who avenges injustice, especially murder (cf. Antiphon, *Third Tetralogy* IV.ii.8). This reading is strengthened by the mention of the *xenikai erinnthes* ("xxxx") at 357a4 below; see Harward, 208 n 65 and Burnyeat and Frede, 155. There is only one other instance of a related word in the *Letters*: at 351c3, *alitēriōdē* is translated "accursed," indicating a pollution that attaches to the committer of sin worthy of vengeance.

[239] "[U]nlearnedness" is a literal rendering of *amathia*. It could also be translated "stupidity," which conveys the word's sharply pejorative connotation, but the literal meaning is important to understand Plato's attribution to *amathia* of "all evils." Cf. *Alcibiades* 118b4 ff. The same word occurs at 351d9 below.

[240] "[L]et us speak well" is a literal rendering of *euphēmōmen*, a word whose meaning is well illustrated by taking note of its antonym, *blasphēmein*, "to speak profanely of sacred things," the root of the English "blasphemy." To "speak well," then, is not merely to "be positive" or "keep it light," but specifically to avoid blaspheming.

[241] *Charin*; see n xxxx above [334d].

moderate regimen in regard to nourishment, and to attempt upon more favorable auguries to bring his wishes to their culmination—which [wishes] were what you [pl.] have heard clearly from me—but as for him among you who is not able to live in the Dorian[242] way according to your [336d] forefathers, who pursues the life both of Dion's slaughterers and of Sicily, neither call upon him nor suppose that he would ever do anything faithful and sound; but call upon the others with a view to a recolonization of all of Sicily and to equality under the law, from Sicily itself and from the whole Peloponnese—and do not fear Athens, for there are [some] even there who surpass all human beings with respect to virtue, and who hate the reckless acts of men who murder guest-friends. But if it should be that these [counsels] have come too late, since the [336e] many and varied disagreements naturally growing each day among the factions are pressing upon you [pl.], any man to whom some divine fortune has given even a small share of right opinion ought presumably to know that there is no cessation of evils for the faction-riven until those who have prevailed by means of battles, casting out of human beings, and slaughters should cease bearing grudges [337a] and turning to vengeance against their enemies, and, being self-controlled and giving common laws that are laid down no more properly for themselves than for those who have been defeated,[243] should compel them to be subject to the laws[244] by

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[242] Syracuse was one of several major Sicilian cities said to have been founded by Dorian Greeks (see Thudycides 6.3.2, 7.57). The Dorian tradition to which Plato appeals here is best understood by reference to the famously abstemious way of life of the Spartans, leaders of the Dorian Greeks throughout the classical period.

[243] The reading of one of the best MS., attested also as an marginal emendation in the other. The alternate reading has *pros hēdonē*, "with a view to pleasure," instead of *prosēkon*, "properly," yielding the reading "giving common laws that are laid down no more with a view to their own pleasure than to that of those who have been overcome."

[244] Lit. "to make use of the laws" (*chrēsthai tois nomois*).

means of a pair of compulsions, awe and fear:[245] [they would compel] by fear by demonstrating that they are stronger than them with respect to force, and by awe, in turn, by being manifestly stronger concerning pleasures and by being more willing and able to be slaves to the laws. But otherwise, it is not possible that a city riven by faction within itself should put an end to evils; [337b] rather factions, enmities, hatreds, and distrusts always like to arise in cities that are themselves so disposed with respect to themselves. But those who have prevailed, whenever they should desire salvation, ought always, themselves within themselves, to select among the Greeks men whom they find through inquiry to be the best:[246] first of all, old [men], who possess children and wives at home, and whose own ancestors are as much as possible many and famous,[247] and all of them possessing sufficient possessions—as a number, fifty such are sufficient for a city of ten thousand men. [337c] Indeed, [they ought] to send for these [men] from their homes by means of entreaties and the greatest possible honors, and once they have been sent for,[248] they [ought to] entreat and direct them to give laws, having sworn oaths to apportion more neither to the victors nor to the vanquished, equally and in common for the whole city. The laws having been given, everything comes down to this: if those who have won victory should render themselves, more than the vanquished, subservient to[249] the laws, [337d] everything will be full of salvation and happiness and [there will be] refuge from all evils; but if they do not, neither call upon me nor upon

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[245] On "awe" (*aidōs*), see n xxxx above [323b]; on the combination "awe and fear" as a foundation for willing enslavement to the laws, see *Laws* 698a9-c3.

[246] Or "most virtuous" (*aristous*).

[247] Marginal emendations in the best MSS. (favored by Burnet and Souilhé) make the phrase "many and famous" to read instead "many, good, and famous".

[248] I.e., once they have arrived.

[249] Lit. "inferior to," "weaker than," "less than" (*ētton*).

another partner [for help] against whoever is unpersuaded by the [things in the] letter that has now been sent [to you]. For these things are siblings of both what Dion and what I undertook to do together, meaning well toward the Syracusans, though in fact they were second. First were the things undertaken to be done first, with Dionysius himself, common goods for all; but some fortune stronger than human beings dissipated [them]. [337e] Would that you [pl.] attempt more fortunately[250] to do these things now, with good fate and some divine fortune.

Well then, let [my] counsel and message[251] have been spoken, as well as [the account of] my earlier arrival at [the court of] Dionysius; but now, he who cares that the later journey and sailing came to pass at once appropriately and harmoniously may listen to what is after this. For indeed, my first time [338a] of occupation[252] in Sicily was thoroughly described, as I said, before the counsel to the intimates and companions close to Dion.

After those things, then, I persuaded Dionysius, in whatever way I was able, to let me go, and we came to an agreement on both sides for when there would come to be peace—for there was war in Sicily at the time.[253] Dionysius said that he would send for Dion and me [to come] back once he had set what concerned his rule back up in a safer state for himself, but he was requesting that Dion should [338b] understand[254]

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[250] "[M]ore fortunately" translates *eutuchesteron*, a comparative, adverbial form of *eutuchēs*; see n xxxx above [321c].

[251] Lit. "letter"; see n xxxx above [313c].

[252] *Diatribēs*; see n xxxx above [309a].

[253] Reading and punctuating the text at 338a3-b1 according to the assertion of Harward, who claims that this is a hyperbaton characteristic of Plato's later style (209 n 74, cf. 89-90).

[254] "[U]nderstand" translates *dianoeisthai*; see n xxxx above [315d]

what had then come to pass for him not an exile, but a removal;[255] and I agreed to the terms of these speeches.[256]

When there came to be peace, he sent for me; but he asked Dion to hold off for yet [another] year, though he was requesting that I come by all means. Dion, then, directed and begged me to set sail; for indeed, word from Sicily was spreading far that Dionysius had at present returned amazingly to a desire for philosophy; hence Dion vigorously begged us not to disobey the summons.[257] But I, while I had surely seen many such things come to pass for the young [338c] with respect to philosophy before, nevertheless it seemed to me safer then to bid a great farewell to both Dion and Dionysius, and I became hateful to both of them by answering that I was old and that none of the things that were now being done were coming to pass in accordance with the agreements.

Now it is likely that, after this, both Archytas[258] arrived at [the court of] Dionysius—[259] for in sailing away, I had created a guest-friendship

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[255] "Μετάστασις, as distinct from φυγή, both technical terms in Greek law, did not involve the confiscation of the condemned person's property" (Morrow 1962, 233 n 43). See also LSJ, "μετάστασις" (def. A.II).

[256] Marginal emendations in the best MSS. suggest the alternative reading, "I agreed that I would come [back] according to the terms of these speeches" (*hēxein hōmologēsa* rather than *xunōmologēsa*).

[257] "[S]ummons" is *metapempsis*, the noun related to the verb translated throughout as "to call for" (*metapempein*).

[258] This is the first mention in the *Letters* of Archytas, the addressee of Letters Nine and Twelve. Archytas was a contemporary of Plato who was born and lived in the Italian city of Tarentum. A man of extraordinary and diverse talents, it was under Archytas's protracted rule that Tarentum reached its apex, from which it dominated southern Italy (see Strabo 6.3.4). Diogenes Laertius reports that he was never defeated in the field and tells us that the Tarentines elected him to seven terms as *stratēgos* despite a constitutional prohibition against anyone serving more than once (8.4.79, 82). Yet none of this begins to touch upon the most famous and impressive facets of Archytas's genius. A follower of the Pythagorean school, Archytas was among the most brilliant mathematicians and scientists of his day, and Pythagorean philosophy flourished in Tarentum under his influence (Strabo 6.3.4). He appears to have been the first to solve the problem of "doubling the cube" (i.e., the "Delian Problem"), and to have done so by means of a

and friendship between Archytas and those in [338d] Tarentum and Dionysius before returning [home]—and there were some others among the Syracusans who had learned[260] some things from Dion, as well as some others [who had learned] from these ones, filled up with certain misunderstandings in philosophy;[261] they seemed to me to be attempting to converse with Dionysius about what concerned such things as though Dionysius had learned everything I thought.[262] He is not ill-natured with

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ground-breaking three-dimensional "mechanical" solution (see Heath 1981, 246-9); he wrote extensively on musical theory, applying mathematics to the study of musical intervals (see Boethius, *On Music* 3.11); he is said to have invented the rigorous study of mechanics (Plutarch, *Marcellus* 14.5; Diogenes Laertius 8.4.83); and tradition even holds that he constructed a steam-powered flying "pigeon" (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 10.12.8-10). It has been argued by van der Waerden that "[t]he contents of Book VIII [of Euclid's *Elements*] must ... be credited to ... Archytas and his circle" (110-2). Yet, for all that his encounter with Archytas cannot but have been highly significant for Plato, the character of their relationship is not entirely clear. Cicero indicates that Plato learned Pythagorean philosophy in part from Archytas (*Tusculan Disputations* 1.17, *Republic* 1.10), while Demosthenes claims that Archytas owed his brilliant political career to Plato's tutelage, as Pericles owed his to Anaxagoras, Alcibiades to Socrates, and Timotheus to Isocrates (*Erotic Essay* 61.46); Plutarch, meanwhile, seems to have thought that Plato disliked Archytas's incorporation into geometry of three-dimensional motion (*Marcellus* 14.6, *Quaestiones Convivales* 8.2), and Lloyd 1990 argues that Plato's adversarial relationship with Archytas motivated the writing of Letter Seven. Finally, it should be noted that Archytas' contributions to mathematics and science, considerable as they were, were eclipsed by the still greater discoveries of his pupil Eudoxus, who also studied with Plato and who is mentioned in Letter Thirteen below (360c3).

[259] Lloyd points out the anacolouthic character of this sentence (162-3). The "both" (*te*) earlier in this sentence makes us expect a grammatically parallel clause that does not come.

[260] The word "learn" throughout this paragraph translates the verb *diakouein*, literally "to hear out" or "to hear through to the end." Likewise, the word "misunderstandings" at 338d3 is *parakousmatōn*, "things misheard" or even "things overheard." Note also that "he had learned nothing" at 338e1, as well as "he did not learn" at 338e3, translate forms of the root verb *akouein*, "to hear," without the *dia-* prefix—not only had Dionysius not heard anything "through to the end," he had heard nothing *at all*. Only the phrase "the ability to learn" at 338d6-7 includes the verb normally translated "to learn," *manthanein*. The use of words of hearing to refer to intellectual rather than sensory apprehension is prevalent in the following pages.

[261] An alternative reading of this part of the sentence would run, "and there were some among the Syracusans who had learned some things from Dion, and some, different from these ones, filled up with certain misunderstandings in philosophy."

[262] Or "intended" (*dienoomhn*); see n xxxx above [315d].

respect to the ability to learn, especially in that he has an amazing love of honor. Perhaps, then, the things being said were agreeable to him, but at the same time he was ashamed, as it was becoming manifest [338e] that he had learned nothing while I was visiting, and hence he came to a desire to learn more distinctly, while at the same time his love of honor was pressing upon him—the reasons for which he did not learn during my earlier visit I went through in the speeches given above, just now. So when I returned home safely[263] and denied him when he called the second time, as I said just now, Dionysius seems to me to have been altogether pursuing his love of honor, lest I should ever seem to anyone [339a] as one who, disdaining his nature and character while also having had experience of his way of living, [264] was, out of disgust, no longer willing to go to his [court].

It is just of me[265] to speak the truth and to endure it if someone, having heard the things that happened, should disdain my philosophy and hold that the tyrant is intelligent.[266] For Dionysius, the third [time], sent me a trireme for the sake of an easy journey, and he sent Archedemus[267] (the one of whom, [Dionysius] held, I thought most [highly] of those in [339b] Sicily, one of those who had spent time with Archytas) and other notables from among those in Sicily. And they were all reporting the same account, that it was amazing how far Dionysius had advanced in philosophy. And he sent me a very long letter,[268] knowing how I was

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[263] The word indicating "safe" return here is *esōthēn*, unrelated to *asphalēs*; see n xxxx above [317a].

[264] "[W]ay of living" translates *diaitēs*, which I usually render as "regimen." See n xxxx above [330c].

[265] Lit. "I am just".

[266] Lit. "that the tyrant has (a) mind."

[267] See n xxxx above [310b].

[268] Here "sent a letter" is not the verb *epestelle*, but the phrase *epempsen epistolēn*.

disposed toward Dion, and, in turn, of Dion's eagerness for me to set sail and go to Syracuse; for the letter was prepared with a view to all these things, and had a beginning that explained [things] in the following way: "Dionysius [339c] to Plato,"—and, having said the customary[269] things in addition to this, he immediately said, "If, obeying us, you should come now to Sicily, first [of all], what is happening concerning Dion will start to be just the way you yourself would want it—and I know that you will want the measured things, and I will concede [them]—but otherwise, none of the affairs concerning Dion will come out to your liking,[270] neither the other things nor the ones concerning [Dion] himself." Thus did he say these things; to say the others [339d] would be long, and there is no propitious moment [for it]. But other letters kept coming in from Archytas and those in Tarentum, extoling the philosophy of Dionysius, and [saying] that, if I did not go now, I would be altogether rending apart[271] their friendship with Dionysius, which had come to be through me, and was no small [matter] with respect to the political things.

At that time, with this summons[272] having coming to be such [as I have described], some pulling me from Sicily and Italy and others artlessly thrusting me, as it were, out of Athens with an entreaty, [339e] yet again the same argument was coming, that there was a need [for me] not to betray Dion, nor my guest-friends and companions in Tarentum, and lurking beneath this for me was that it is nothing amazing for a young

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[269] Lit. "lawful" (*nomima*).

[270] Lit. "according to your mind" (*soi ... kata noun*).

[271] The word for "I would be rending apart" here is *diabaloiēn*, which is the same word that I have often translated "slander" elsewhere in the *Letters*.

[272] "[S]ummons" is *metapempsis*, the noun related to the verb translated throughout as "to call for" (*metapempein*).

human being, overhearing[273] affairs worthy of account, [if he is] a good learner, to come to a passionate desire[274] for the best life. There was a need, therefore, to put the matter clearly to the test[275] as to which way things stood after all, and, if indeed things should really be as they had been said [to be], in no way to betray this very thing, nor for me truly to become the cause of so great a reproach. [340a] So I am carried off, veiled by this calculation, dreading many things and divining not very beautifully, as is likely. At any rate, by going I really made this one, at least, "the third for the savior,"[276] for, fortunately,[277] I was saved again, and for these things, at least, I ought to acknowledge [my] gratitude to Dionysius next after a god, because he prevented many who wished to destroy me and gave some part of my affairs to awe.[278]

[340b] But when I arrived, I supposed I must first put the following thing to the test:[279] had Dionysius really been kindled by philosophy as by

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[273] *Parakouonta* here might also be translated "mishearing" or "misunderstanding"; see n xxxx above [338d].

[274] "[P]assionate desire" translates a form of *erōs*, whence the English "erotic." Thous *erōs* can refer to what we would call "erotic" or "romantic" love, its scope of meaning is much broader. It refers in general to the human attraction to and desire for the beautiful or noble (*to kalon*; see n xxxx above [311d]), in all its psychological complexity. Socrates' speech in Plato's *Symposium* brings out the connection of this passionate desire for *to kalon* to the human longing for immortality, and thus extends *erōs* beyond physical or romantic love by connecting it to the loftiest political, literary, and philosophic ambitions. It is indeed a quintessential feature of Platonic philosophy that the philosophic activity itself is characterized as "erotic"; see *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, and cf. *Republic* Book Nine. The only other occurrences of any such words in the *Letters* are in Letter Eight., at 354d5 and 355d5.

[275] The word for "put to the test" here is *exelenxai*, related to "elenctic," the word that describes Socratic refutation. Indeed, *exelenxai* could also mean "to refute" even here, though the context seems to call for the translation I have chosen.

[276] See n xxxx above [334d].

[277] "[F]ortunately" translates *eutuchōs*, the adverbial form of *eutuchēs*; see n xxxx above [321c].

[278] That is, Dionysius allowed himself to be guided by *aidōs* ("reverence," "awe," "shame"; see n xxxx above [323b]) in some part of his dealings with Plato.

[279] *Elenchon*; see n. xxxx above [339e].

a fire, or had this great speech come to Athens in vain? Now, there is a certain way of attempting to grasp such things that is not low-born but is really fitting for tyrants, especially those filled with misunderstandings,[280] which, as even I perceived right away when I arrived, was very much what had happened to Dionysius. One needs to show such [people] both what sort of thing the whole problem[281] is [340c] and through how many problems and how much toil it lies. For the one who has heard [this], if he should really be a philosopher, being both an intimate and worthy of the divine problem, will hold that he has heard of an amazing path upon which one must immediately strain oneself, and that it would not be worth living otherwise. After this, then, having strained both himself and his leader upon the path, he will not let up until he should either bring everything to a finish or get such an ability that he, separately from the one who has shown him, is unable[282] to be a guide himself. [340d] In this way and according to these intentions will such [a person] live, managing whatever will be [his] business, but, beyond everything [else], always holding on to philosophy and to the daily nourishment that would

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[280] Lit. "things misheard" or "overheard" (*parakousmatōn*); see n xxxx above [338d].

[281] The word *pragma*, here translated "problem," appears eight times in these two paragraphs (between 340b8 and 341c7), in addition to several instances of related words (*prattō*, *praxis*). A word I most commonly translate "affair," *pragma* can range in meaning from the extremely broad "thing" or "matter" to a variety of more specific connotations. In the present passage, Plato seems to use *pragma* to refer to the "problems" encountered in philosophic investigations, i.e., to the "matters of concern" for philosophers. Although the translation "problem" may sometimes mislead the reader where "affair" or "matter" might be more appropriate, I have consistently rendered *pragma* by "problem" from here through 341c in order to allow the reader more easily to follow Plato's use of this word in this context. See also *pragmatos* at 344a3 with my note there, and consider also 312a5-6 and 313b4 above, along with my notes there on *pragma* and *pragmateia*.

[282] The best manuscripts here read "unable" which seems to be contradictory to the sense of the passage. In one MS., a scholiast has suggested the emendation "able" (removing the alpha privative) , and Stephanus adopted the emendation "not unable," both of which are basically plausible suggestions. But the reader should have the opportunity to consider whether the more challenging reading, which the manuscripts all contain, might be the correct one.

most of all succeed in making him a good learner, having a good memory, and able to calculate, as one who is sober in himself; the opposite of this, he continues hating to the end. But those who are not really philosophers but have been tinctured by opinions just as those whose bodies have been burnt by the sun, once they have seen how many are the subjects of learning,[283] how great is the toil [340e], and the ordered daily regimen befitting the problem, they are led with difficulty and it is impossible for them, and indeed they do not [341a] come to be able to engage in the practice, but some of them persuade themselves that they have heard the whole sufficiently and have no further need of any problems. And so, this attempt comes to be the clear and safest one with respect to those who luxuriate and are incapable of enduring toil, since he can never cast the blame upon the one who is showing [him the way], but rather he [must blame] himself, as he is not able to engage in the practices advantageous[284] for the problem. In this way were the things then spoken to Dionysius spoken. Neither, therefore, was I going through everything, nor [341b] was Dionysius asking me to; for he pretended both to know and sufficiently to have a hold on many and the greatest things because of hearsay from others.[285]

I even hear that he has subsequently written about the things he then heard, composing [the writing] as though it were his own treatise[286] and not at all [composed] out of the things he heard; but I know nothing

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[283] "Subjects of learning" is a literal translation of *mathēmata*, whence the English "mathematics." The Greek word can refer more specifically to mathematical subjects, which possibility should perhaps be kept in mind; cf. 319c1-4.

[284] *Ta prosphera*; see n. xxxx above [330d].

[285] The word here is *parakoas*, related to but distinct from *parakousma* as at 338d3 and 340b6. This word could also mean "misunderstandings" or "things misheard." See n xxxx above [338d].

[286] "Treatise" here seems to be the correct translation of *tēchnēn*, which more usually means "art." The translation "as though it were his own art" is also possible and should be considered.

of these [writings]. I know some others have written about these same things, but as to who they are, they don't [know] themselves. This much, at any rate, have I to explain about all [341c] who have written or will write, and who claim to know about the things I take seriously, whether [claiming] to have heard them from me, or from others, or that they discovered them themselves: it cannot be, according to my opinion at least, that they understand[287] anything of the problem. Therefore there is no writing of mine, at least, concerning them, nor will there ever come to be [one]; for it is in no way speakable as are the other subjects of learning, but rather, from the coming to be of much intercourse concerning the problem itself and living together, suddenly, as from a jumping fire, [341d] a light is kindled, and, having come to be in the soul, it straightaway nourishes itself. And yet I know this much, at least: that in being written or said by me, they would be said best, and that, if they were written badly, it would pain me not least. But if they appeared to me to be sufficiently writeable and speakable to the many, what nobler thing could have been done in life by us than this, both to write [something that is] a great benefit for human beings and to lead nature forth into the light [341e] for all? But the undertaking[288] spoken of concerning them I do not hold to be good for human beings unless for some few, however many are themselves able to find [them] out through a small indication—of the others, it would fill some, in no way harmoniously, with incorrect disdain, and others with a lofty and empty hope as though [342a] they had learned some august things.

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[287] Lit. "hear" (*epaïō*; see n xxxx above [338d]).

[288] "Undertaking" or "attempt" is the primary meaning of *epicheirēsis*, though in Aristotle the word can also mean a line of dialectical reasoning. Thus, "undertaking concerning them" could mean something like a "disquisition on them" as Harward has it. See also Morrow's note, as well as Souilhé's, each ad. loc.

But I have come to have it in mind to speak at still greater length about them; for perhaps the things about which I'm speaking will be clearer once they have been spoken about. For there is a certain true speech opposed to the one who has dared to write of such things in any way; and though it has often been spoken by me before, it is likely that it must be said now too.

There are, for each of the beings, three things through which it is necessary that science[289] comes to be, and [science] itself is fourth—[342b] there is need to set down as fifth the very thing that is knowable[290] and is truly a being.[291] One is name, second is definition,[292] the third is image, fourth is science. Take, then, what concerns one thing, if you wish to learn what is now being spoken of, and understand thus what concerns all things. A circle is something spoken of, of which this very thing we just now uttered is a name. A definition of it is the second

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[289] "[S]cience" translates the word *epistēmē*, which appears five times in this section (between 342a7 and 343e2) and nowhere else in the *Letters*. *Epistēmē* refers to the kind of knowledge one obtains, not just by familiarity with something, but on the basis of a rigorous understanding of its structure, causes, etc. See n xxxx above [321e].

[290] "[K]nowable" is related neither to *oida* nor to *epistamai* (see n xxxx above [321e]); rather, it translates *gnōston*, which gives the root, for example, of the English "cognition." The sense of the word might be approached, therefore, with something like the phrase "available as an object of cognition."

[291] Accepting the marginal emendations in the MSS. favored by Burnet, Souilhé, and most translators (see Harward 214 n 96), which indicate that there were a pair of plausibly minor corruptions in transmission. Though one must strain the grammar a bit, one could render the un-emended version, "set down as fifth that thing on account of which it is knowable and truly exists."

[292] The word "definition," occurring three times here in 342b, twice at 343b, and once at 344b4, appears from the context to be the correct translation for these instances of the word *logos*, a common Greek word with a wide range of possible meanings. *Logos* generally refers in some way to the human capacity for reasoned speech, and can mean "reason," "speech," "language," or "reckoning"—in each case, either as a faculty or as a specific instance of its use—as well as "account," "argument," and, as here, "definition," among other things.

thing, being composed of names and phrases;[293] for "that which is everywhere equally distant from the extremes to the middle" would be a definition for that very thing of which "round" and "circumference"[294] are [342c] names, as well as "circle." Third is what is drawn and erased, and what is turned on a lathe, and what is destroyed—of these things the circle itself, which all these are about,[295] suffers nothing, as it is different from these. Fourth is science and mind and true opinion about these;[296] and all this must be set down in turn as one, being not in sounds, nor in shapes of bodies, but within souls, from which it is clear that it is different from both the nature of the circle and the [342d] three spoken of earlier. Of these, mind has approached most nearly in kinship and similarity to the fifth, while the others are more distant. And it is at once the same way concerning both straight and round shape, and color, and

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[293] This common sense reading of *onomatōn kai rhēmatōn* (here and at 343b4-5 below) is supported by the discussion at *Cratylus* 399a6-c6, where Socrates clearly indicates that a *rhema* is a multi-word phrase that may be contracted to form a single *onoma*. However, the explicit definition of these same terms by the Eleatic Stranger in the *Sophist* (262a1-8) would suggest the translations "noun" and "verb" for *onoma* and *rhēma* respectively. Perhaps most ambiguous but most directly relevant is *Cratylus* 424e4-5a7, where Socrates speculates that just as letters are combined to make syllables, so from syllables are composed "both *onomatōn* and *rhēmatōn*; and again, from the *onomatōn* and *rhēmatōn* we will compose something great and beautiful and whole, and just as earlier the animal [was made] by [the art of] painting, now *ton logon* [will be made] by *onomastikē*, or *rhētorikē*, or whatever the art may be." See also Burnyeat and Frede, who argue that *rhēmata* here means "descriptions" (123 n 7).

[294] Two words that can each mean "circular" (*strongulon* and *perpheres*), with subtle variations in connotation. See Harward 1932 ad loc.

[295] The relationship between the circle itself and the "images" of it is stated in extremely vague terms (*hon peri estin*). Burnyeat and Frede propose "which all these are to do with," noting the alternatives preferred by Morrow ("to which they all refer"), Post, Bury, and Brisson ("are related"), and Souilhé ("auquel on rapporte") (124). One might compare Letter Two, "All things are around the king of all things, … the second things are around a second, and the third things around a third" (312e1-4), where "around" translates the same construction (*peri* + accusative).

[296] It is common sense to think that the adjective "true" (*alēthēs*) in this sentence belongs with "opinion" (*doxa*) as I have suggested. But if, as the text of the MSS seems to indicate, that part of the sentence runs *nous alēthēs te kai doxa*, and not simply *nous alēthēs te doxa*, it is harder to insist against the reading "true mind and opinion."

concerning good and noble and just, and concerning every body, both artificial and having come to be according to nature (fire, water, and all such things), and concerning every animal, and character in souls, and concerning all things done and suffered. For of these things, [342e] someone who did not somehow or other get hold of the four would never completely be a participant in science of the fifth. In addition, these things undertake to make clear the "of what sort" about each thing no less [343a] than the being of each, because of the weakness of the speeches;[297] on account of which things no one with intelligence[298] would ever dare to put the things understood by him into [speech],[299] and into something unchangeable[300] at that, which is indeed the case with what has been written in engraved letters.[301]

One needs to learn again this thing that has just now been said. Each circle, of those drawn in practice or even turned on a lathe, is full of the opposite of the fifth—for it everywhere touches the straight—but the circle itself, we say, does not hold in itself any [part], either smaller or larger, of its opposite nature. We say that no name of these things is in any way [343b] stable,[302] that there is nothing to prevent the things now

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[297] "[T]he weakness of the speeches" seems to refer to a deficiency of language as such. But the ambiguity of this phrase should be stressed given that "speeches" translates *logōn*, the same word that identified the second of "the five" at 342b2 (i.e., "definition"; see n xxxx above).

[298] Lit. "having a mind"

[299] The phrase literally runs, "to put the things understood by him into it," where "it" (*auto*) must refer to "the weakness of the speeches." "[T]he things understood" translates *ta nenoēmena*, a participle related to the word *nous* ("intelligence," "mind") occurring earlier in the sentence. Note also that the words "by him" (*hup' autou*) are reported only in the margins of the MSS.

[300] Lit. "immovable."

[301] Here, of course, "engraved letters" (*tupois*) refers to written characters, not to "epistles" as in the title of the work (*Epistolai*).

[302] "[S]table" is *bebaios*, a word that appears four times here at 343b. The same word is translated "steadfast" throughout the rest of the *Letters* (with the exception of "firmly" at 313b6 and "assurance" at 346b8).

called round from being called straight and the straight round, and that nothing will be in a less stable state for those who make changes and call [things] oppositely. And moreover concerning definition, if indeed the definition itself is composed of names and phrases, it can in no way be stable in a sufficiently stable way. And there is in turn a ten-thousandfold argument[303] for each of the four to the effect that it is unclear, but the greatest is the very one we said a short time ago: that, of the two beings—the being, and the "of what sort"—when the soul seeks to know not the [343c] "of what sort?" but the "what?", each of the four, by holding out to the soul, both in speech and in relation to deeds, the thing that is not sought—each thing, both what is said and what is demonstrated, always being rendered easily refutable by the senses—fills every man, so to speak, with every perplexity and unclarity. And so, in those cases wherein, by bad[304] rearing, we have not been habituated to seek the truth, but rather whichever of the images is held out suffices, we do not become ridiculous to each other, the questioned to [343d] the questioners, who are able to toss around and refute the four. But in those cases wherein we compel [someone] to answer and clarify the fifth, he who wishes to confute[305] (of those who are able) prevails, and makes the one expounding in speeches or writings or answers seem to the many among the listeners to know[306] nothing of the things about which he is undertaking to write or speak; sometimes they are ignorant that it is not

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[303] Note that, while *logos* seems to refer to "definition" as the second of "the four" in the previous sentence, Plato now employs the same word to mean something like an "argument" *about* "the four," and again to mean something like "in speech" later in the sentence.

[304] Or "wicked" (*ponēros*).

[305] Lit. "to overturn" (*anatrepein*).

[306] Here "to know" is *gignōkein*, "recognize" or "understand," and neither *eidenai* (which I most commonly translate "to know") nor *epistasthai* ("to know scientifically"). The word "ignorant" (*agnoountōn*) later in the sentence shares the same root.

the soul of him who has written or spoken that is refuted, but the nature of each of the four, being naturally [343e] poor.[307]

But the way leading through all of them, shifting up and down to each one, does with difficulty give birth to a science of the good-natured in the good-natured; but if it grows by nature badly—either naturally, as with the disposition of soul among the many both in learning and in the things spoken of as "character,"[308] [344a] or if these are corrupted—not even Lynceus[309] could make such as these see. In one word, neither goodness at learning nor memory could make him who is not akin to the matter[310] [see]—for the beginning[311] does not come to be in dispositions alien [to it]—so that neither those who are not naturally attached[312] and akin both to the just things and to the other things insofar as they are noble (though different ones [among them] may yet be good learners and rememberers of different things), nor those who *are* akin but are bad learners and forgetful—*none* of these could ever learn the truth of virtue to the [344b] extent possible, nor of vice. For it is necessary to learn them simultaneously, and [to learn] the false and true of the whole of

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[307] Or "petty," "trivial," or even "defective" (*phaulōs*).

[308] Lit. "characters." *Ēthē* might even be rendered, "traits of moral character." See n xxxx above [316a]

[309] One of the Argonauts, Lynceus was a figure from Greek mythology whose extraordinary keenness of vision became proverbial (see, e.g., Aristophanes, *Wealth* 210). Pindar says "his eye was the sharpest of everyone upon the earth" (*Nemean Odes* 10.61-3), and Apollonius of Rhodes (writing after Plato's death) adds that, "if the report is genuine, that man could easily see clearly even beneath the earth" (*Argonautica* 1.153-5). There does not appear to be any tradition, however, holding that Lynceus could bestow sight upon others.

[310] That is, presumably, to any matter being investigated in this way. But *pragmatos* here may refer again to the "problem" discussed above at 340b-1c. See n xxxx above.

[311] Or "principle" (*archēn*); see n xxxx above [309a].

[312] "[N]aturally attached" translates the adjective *prosphueis*, which suggests that something has grown together with or sprouted out of something else. It is closely related to the verb *prosphuō*, which appears only once in the *Letters* (313d2). The two passages should be compared.

being[313] simultaneously, with total occupation[314] and a great deal of time, just as I said in the beginning; but with difficulty, each of them having been rubbed against one another—names and definitions, sights and perceptions—[and] having been refuted in [the course of] kindly refutations, if those making use of questions and answers are without envy, [then] practical wisdom concerning each shines forth, as well as mind, straining to [344c] the utmost extent of human power. Wherefore every man who is serious about the serious beings is far from[315] ever having written [about them], lest he should cast them down amidst the envy and perplexity of human beings. In one word, one needs to recognize on the basis of these things, whenever one sees writings that have been written—whether laws of a lawgiver or in any other things at all—that these were not the most serious things to this [man], if indeed he himself was serious, but that they lie somewhere in the noblest region he possesses.[316] But if, even though these things were really taken seriously by him, he put them in writing, [344d] "then indeed,"—not "gods," but mortals—"themselves destroyed the wits in you."[317]

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[313] *Ousias*; see n xxxx above [317c].

[314] "[T]otal occupation" translates *triēs pasēs*, "every occupation" or even "every study." The noun is *tribēs*, directly related and very close in meaning to *diatribēs*, for which see n xxxx above [309a]. The literal meaning of the word is a "rubbing against," just as the participle *tribomena* ("having been rubbed … against") occurring later in the sentence.

[315] "[I]s far from" translates the idiom *peri pollou dei*, literally "has need of much."

[316] Lit. "the noblest [or most beautiful] region of those that are his." The enigmatic phrase has been interpreted by Morrow and Bury as referring to the author's "soul," "heart," "mind," or "head."

[317] The line Plato here cites and alters appears twice in Homer's *Iliad*: it is spoken once by Paris to Antenor (7.360), and once by Hector to Polydamas (12.234). In each case, the speaker is responding to a piece of advice that, while prudent and prescient, is unwelcome because it opposes his own passionate desire. Also in each case, it is not only this line that is spoken verbatim, but also the three preceding lines (but for the name of the person addressed), which together make up the first four lines of the speaker's rebuttal. The full four lines are:

> [Antenor/Polydamas], these things that you advise are no longer dear to me.

He who has followed along with this tale and wandering[318] will know well that, if either Dionysius or someone lesser or greater wrote something of the highest and first things concerning nature, he was someone who had in no way heard or learned soundly[319] the things of which he wrote, according to my argument; for he would then have venerated them like I do, and he would not dare to cast them out into dissonance and unseemliness. For he wrote not for the sake of[320] reminders—for there is no [344e] danger that someone would forget it once one gets hold [of it] in one's soul; for of all things it is posited in the fewest [words]—rather, if indeed [he wrote them, he did so] for the sake of a shameful love of honor, either as though he was setting it down himself or indeed as though he was a participant in an education of which he was not worthy, cherishing the reputation [345a] that comes of this participation.[321]

If, then, this is what Dionysius got from our single intercourse, then perhaps it is [so]. But *how* that ever came to be, "May Zeus knows!"[322]

You know how to think of another tale, better than this one.

But if you are genuinely advising this in seriousness

Then indeed, [the] gods themselves destroyed the wits in you.

[318] "Tale" is *muthōi*, for which "myth" is not an altogether inappropriate translation; note the appearance of the same word in the Homeric passage alluded to by Plato in the preceding sentence (n xxxx above [344d]). "Wandering" (*planōi*) could mean "digression" in this context.

[319] Lit. "healthily."

[320] *Charin*; see n xxxx above [334d].

[321] Accepting the one-letter variant (from *genomenēs* to *genomenēn*) found, not in the main text of the best MSS., but as an emendation in one and in the main text of a later, important MS. The other version would read, "cherishing the reputation that belongs to the coming to be of this participation."

[322] Plato writes this exclamation—in spirit something like "God knows"—in the Theban dialect (*ittō* instead of *istō*, "may he know"). The exact same expression is used by Socrates' Theban companion Cebes is Plato's *Phaedo* (62a), but its significance is otherwise unclear.

[as] the Theban says; for I myself went through what I said only once, and never again thereafter. As to what has happened concerning these things, then, whoever cares to discover the way in which it ever happened needs to think of what is after this: what ever was the cause of our not thoroughly going through it for the second and the third time, and more often? Does Dionysius, having heard [me] only once, [345b] thus suppose he knows, and does he sufficiently know [in fact], either by having made the discovery himself or even having learned beforehand from others? Or [does he suppose] the things said were paltry? Or, thirdly, [does he suppose that they are] not on his level,[323] but rather greater, and that he is not really able to live taking care over practical wisdom and virtue? For if [he supposes they are] paltry, he'll be battling many witnesses to the contrary, who would be altogether more authoritative judges concerning such things than Dionysius; but if [he supposes] that he has discovered or learned [them]—or at any rate that [they are] worthy with a view to the education of a free soul—[345c] how, unless he is an amazing human being, could he ever have dishonored the leader and authority regarding these things so indifferently? But how he dishonored [that one], I shall explain.

No long interval of time having passed after this, though he had previously been allowing Dion to possess his own things and to reap the wealth,[324] he would now no longer allow his trustees to send his [wealth] to the Peloponnese, as though he had altogether forgotten his letter; for

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[323] Or "beyond him," or "not suited to him" (*ou kath' hauton*).

[324] "[W]ealth" here and wherever it occurs in the rest of Letter Seven is *chrēmata*, a word I have otherwise translated "money." In the remainder of this letter, the word is sometimes used in a manner that must refer to a broader notion of wealth than money alone. Note also that "reap" translates *karpousthai*, of which the primary meaning is in reference to fruit or other crops, whence the metaphorical meaning of collecting interest or deriving profit. This is the only time in the *Letters* the word is used with a grammatical object—*chrēmata*, "wealth" or "money." In other cases, I have used the phrase "reap the profits" to translate this single intransitive verb.

[he claimed that] it was not Dion's [wealth] but his son's, who was his nephew [345d] and of whom he was therefore the legal guardian.[325] These were the things that had been done up to this point in time; so, when these things had come to be in this way, I myself saw Dionysius's desire for philosophy with precision, and it would have been permissible for me to be vexed, whether I wished to or not.

For it was already summer then and [the time] for the ships to sail out; and it seemed that I needed to be hard, not on Dionysius, but rather on myself and on those who had forced me to go [345e] for the third time into the strait by Scylla, "so that I might once more measure back out the path to destructive Charybdis,"[326] and [that I needed] to say to Dionysius that it was impossible for me to stay, Dion having been thus trampled in the mud. But he was trying to reassure [me] and was begging [me] to stay, as he supposed that it would not go beautifully for him for me to go myself, as quickly as possible, as a messenger about such things. But as he wasn't persuading me, [346a] he said he would prepare a conveyance. For I was intending to set sail by embarking on the messenger ships,[327] as I had grown angry and was supposing that I needed to suffer whatever [may come] if I should be prevented, since it was entirely evident that I was committing no injustice, but was being done injustice; but he, seeing that I would not accede to staying put, contrived

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[325] The words "trustees" and "guardian" in this sentence are effectively the same (*epitropos*). As Harward explains, "Dionysius now abandoned the assumption that Dion was merely on his travels (*v.* 338b1), and treated him as an exile, so that the guardianship of Dion's son passed into his own hands" (219 n121).

[326] Homer, *Odyssey* 12.428.

[327] It is not entirely clear what is meant by "messenger ships," but the phrase apparently refers to ships that came and departed at regular intervals. The word "messenger" translates *apostolois*, which is closely related to *epistolē*, "letter."

the following scheme to [make me] stay for the duration of that sailing season.[328]

The day after these things, he came and gave me a speech to persuade [me]. "Let's me and you," he said, "get Dion and Dion's things [346b] out of the way and be rid of our frequent disagreements about them. On your account," he said, "I will do the following things for Dion. I request that he, taking what is his, dwell in the Peloponnese—not as an exile, however, but as one for whom it is possible to voyage here whenever it be so resolved[329] in common by him, me, and you [pl] his friends. But these things are [conditional on] him not plotting against me, and you [pl], your [pl] intimates, and Dion's who are here are to become his guarantors in these things—let him render his assurance[330] to you [pl]. As for the money that he would receive, [346c] let it be deposited in the Peloponnese and at Athens among whomever seems [good] to you [pl], and let Dion reap the profits,[331] but let him not come to have authority to make withdrawals without you [pl]. For I do not much trust in him that, if he should have the use of this money, he would come to be just concerning me—for it is no small amount—but I have rather trusted in you and yours. See, then if these things are agreeable to you, and stay for the year on these terms; and then, when

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[328] Lit. "sailing out," *ekploun* in this context appears to refer to the season during which the "messenger ships" were active.

[329] Lit. "whenever it should seem [good]" (*hotan sundokēi*). This language was typical of legislation or decrees, wherein "it seems good to," for example, "the Athenians," effectively meant "the Athenians resolve…" . The same phrase is employed a number of times in the remainder of this letter (347b6, c1, c3, 348c9, e2), as well as once each in Letters Eight (357c4) and Thirteen (360b8).

[330] "Assurance" is the same word I have elsewhere translated "steadfast" or "stable." Used as a substantive as it is here, it can carry the meaning of a "surety" or "security" offered as part of an agreement.

[331] See n xxxx above [345c].

the season comes, go away [346d] and bring this money; and I know well that Dion will have a great deal of gratitude for you for accomplishing these things on his behalf."

When I heard this speech I was disgusted; nevertheless, after deliberating, I said that I would report my opinions about these things to him on the following day. These were the arrangements we made together at that time. Then after these things, when I came to be by myself, I was deliberating, very confused. First, the following speech led the way in my deliberation: [346e] "Come now, if Dionysius intends to do nothing of the things he says, and if, when I leave, he should send a letter to Dion to persuade [him]—both [doing so] himself and directing many others of those with him [to do so]—[saying] what he now says to me, that he himself was willing, but that I was not willing, to do what he was proposing to me, but that I was taking altogether little account of his [i.e., Dion's] affairs; and in addition to these things, if he were moreover not willing to send me out, but, not [even] giving commands to any of the ship captains, [347a] he simply indicated to all that he did not wish for me to sail out—who then would be willing to lead me as a passenger [on his] ship as I set out from Dionysius's house?" For, in addition to the other bad things, I was then dwelling in the garden about his house, whence the porter would not be willing to let me go unless some instruction had been sent to him from Dionysius. "But if I stay around for the year, I can send a letter to Dion [relating] these things, as well as the [circumstances] I am in and what I am doing; and then, if Dionysius should do something of the things he says, the things done by me [347b] will not have been altogether ridiculous—for Dion's property, if one were to value[332] it correctly, is perhaps not less than a hundred talents—

[332] Lit. "honor" (*ektimai*).

[333] but if things turn out to be of such a sort as it is now starting to appear likely that they will, I am perplexed as to what I will do with myself; nevertheless, it is perhaps necessary, for this year anyway, to toil further and to attempt to frustrate[334] by deeds the machinations of Dionysius."

It having been so resolved by me,[335] I said to Dionysius on the following day that, [347c] "I have resolved to stay. But I request," I said, "that you not hold me to be an authority over Dion, but that, together with me, you send {him a note clarifying}[336] the things that have now been resolved, and ask whether these things satisfy him. And if [they do] not, but he wishes for and requests some other things, [we must ask him] to send a letter [relating] these things as fast as possible—but you must in no way make changes to the things that concern him until then."

These things were spoken; upon these things we agreed, nearly just as they have been said now. After this, the ships sailed out, and it was no longer possible for me to sail, at which point [347d] Dionysius remembered and said to me that there was need that half of the property be Dion's and half his son's. He said he would sell it, and that once it was sold he would give half to me to take away and leave the other half to his son, for in this way things would be most justly disposed. Stricken by what had been said, I supposed it would be totally ridiculous to say anything further; nevertheless, I said that we ought to wait for the letter from Dion and send a letter back about these very things. But right after these things, he totally impetuously [347e] sold all his [i.e., Dion's]

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[333] The Attic talent was both a measure of weight (about 57 pounds) and a monetary value corresponding to that same weight in silver. In the fourth century, one talent corresponded to something like nine years' worth of wages for a skilled laborer such as a carpenter (Engen 2004).

[334] Or "to refute" (*elenxai*); see n xxxx above [339e].

[335] Lit.: "these things seeming [good] to me," here and twice more in this paragraph. See n xxxx above [346b5].

[336] The words in braces are suggested in marginal additions to the best MSS.

property, on whatever terms, in whatever manner, and to whomever he wanted, but to me he uttered absolutely nothing about these things, and thus I, in turn, likewise no longer conversed at all about Dion's affairs with him; for I supposed there was no longer anything more to do.

Up until these things, my coming to the aid of philosophy and of friends had come to be in this way; after these things, we were living, I and [348a] Dionysius—I looking outward like a bird longing to fly up and away,[337] he contriving some way that he could frighten me and give back[338] nothing of what was Dion's; nevertheless, we claimed to all Sicily that we were indeed companions. Now Dionysius undertook, against the customs of his father, to reduce the wages of his senior mercenaries; but the soldiers, having been angered, gathered together in a group and claimed they would not yield. He was undertaking to use [348b] force by barring the doors of the acropolis, but they threw themselves right at the walls, shouting some barbarian and warlike paean; and Dionysius, having come to be in great dread from this, conceded to everything and still more to the peltasts[339] then gathered together.

A certain speech quickly went around that Heraclides[340] was responsible for all these things that had happened. When he heard this, Heraclides took himself out of the way unseen, and Dionysius [348c] sought to seize him but, being perplexed, and sending for Theodotes to

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[337] With the phrase "longing to fly up and away," Plato employs an alliterative flourish: *pothōn pothen anaptesthai*.

[338] "[G]ive back" translates the participle *apodous*, a form of the same word translated "sell off" at 318a6 and b3. Consideration of the respective contexts seems to require these different translations, but the divergence is worth noting because the relevant passages of Letters Three and Seven contain parallel accounts of the same events, and in both cases this verb is used to refer to some part of what Dionysius did or claimed he would do with Dion's property.

[339] Light infantry troops named for their distinctive light shield (*peltē*).

[340] On Heraclides, as well as Theodotes and Eurybius, who have parts in the story narrated here, see n xxxx above [318d].

come the garden…[341] And I myself happened to be walking about[342] in the garden then, so while there are other things from their conversation which I do not know and did not hear, what Theodotes said before me toward Dionysius I both know and remember.

"Now Plato," he said, "I am persuading this Dionysius that, if I should come to be able to bring Heraclides here to us to [give] speeches concerning the charges that have now come to be against him, and if it be resolved[343] that he needs to dwell not in Sicily, then I would request [348d] that he sail away to the Peloponnese, taking his son and his wife, to dwell there while in no way harming Dionysius, and reaping the profit[344] from his [property]. I sent for him even before, and I will send for him again now; whether from the earlier summons, then, or from the present one, he will hearken to me; but I request and beg of Dionysius, if someone should happen upon Heraclides either in the fields or within [the city], that nothing else [348e] nasty happen to him, but that he be removed[345] from the land until something else be resolved by Dionysius.

"Do you concede these things?" he said, speaking to Dionysius.

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[341] There is an anacoluthon here "of the nominativus pendens type" (Harward 220 n 132). But one might note that Plato's failure to describe precisely what Dionysius said to Heraclides upon his arrival is explained by his immediate acknowledgement that he did not hear their whole conversation.

[342] "Walking about" is a literal rendering of the word *peripatōn*. The same word can carry the connotation of "walking about while teaching or discoursing," as indeed the LSJ s.v. suggests it does at this point in the *Letters*. It is debated whether this is the precise origin of the name "peripatetic" given to Aristotle's school and followers.

[343] For this phrase, here and later in the paragraph, see n. xxxx above [346b].

[344] See n xxxx above [345c].

[345] "[R]emoved" is *metastēnai*; see n xxxx above [338a-b].

"I concede [them]," he said. "Not even if he should appear at your house will he suffer anything nasty [such as would be] contrary to the things that have now been said."

The day after this, Eurybius and Theodotes came to me in the evening in seriousness, both raising an amazing clamor, and Theodotes said: "Plato, you were present yesterday for the things to which Dionysius agreed, with me and you, concerning Heraclides."

"Of course," I said.

"Well," he said, "now peltasts are running around seeking to seize Heraclides, and there is a danger that he is somewhere [around] here. [349a] By all means,"[346] he said, "follow along with us to Dionysius."

So we departed and came before him, and the pair of them stood in silence, weeping, but I said, "These ones are frightened that you might do something new about Heraclides, contrary to the things agreed upon yesterday; for it seems to me that, having returned, he has become visible somewhere [around] here."

When he had heard this, he was inflamed and turned every sort of color one growing angry would emit; and Theodotes, falling before him [349b] and taking his hand, wept and was supplicating him not to do any such thing; but I, interrupting and reassuring him, said "Take heart, Theodotes, for Dionysius will never dare to do anything else contrary to the things agreed upon yesterday."

And he looked at me and said, very tyrannically, "With *you*, I agreed to nothing either small or large."

"By the gods," I said, "but you did, with respect to these things which he is now begging you not to do." And having said these things, I

[346] Li. "by every contrivance."

turned around and departed. After [349c] these things, he was hunting for Heraclides while Theodotes was sending messengers to Heraclides directing him to flee. But he [i.e., Dionysius] sent out Tisias[347] and some peltasts, directing them to pursue. But Heraclides, it is said, reached the province of the Carthaginians, escaping by a small part of a day.

After this, the old plot of not giving back Dion's money seemed to Dionysius to hold out a plausible[348] argument for enmity against me. First, he sent me out of the acropolis, discovering [349d] a pretext that the women needed to perform some ritual sacrifice for ten days[349] in the garden in which I was dwelling; so he commanded me to stay outside [the acropolis] at Archedemus's[350] [house] during this time. While I was there, Theodotes sent for me, greatly vexed concerning the things that had been done then and blaming Dionysius; but when he [i.e., Dionysius] heard that I had gone in to [visit] Theodotes, [349e] he made this yet another pretext, sister to the previous one, for his conflict with me, and he sent someone to ask me if I was really getting together with Theodotes upon his sending for me.

"Absolutely," I said.

"Well then, he [i.e., Dionsyius] directed [me]," he said, "to explain to you that you are acting[351] in no way nobly in always making more of Dion and Dion's friends than of him." These things were said, and he

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[347] This Tisias is otherwise unknown.

[348] Lit. "persuasive" (*pithanon*).

[349] This women-only festival was the Thesmaphoria, parodied by Aristophanes in his *Thesmaphoriasuzae*, which the Sicilian women celebrated as a ten-day festival as opposed to the three-day version put on by Athens and other Greek cities (Diodorus Siculus 5.4). It would have taken place in October (Harward, 220 n 135).

[350] On Archedemus, see n xxxx above [310b].

[351] Lit. "making" (*poieis*).

no longer sent for me [to come] back to his house, as though I was now clearly a friend of Theodotes and of Heraclides, but of him an enemy, and he supposed that I did not have goodwill [toward him] because Dion's money was completely running out. [350a] After this, then, I was dwelling outside of the acropolis among the mercenaries. Among others, those of the rowers[352] who were from Athens, my fellow-citizens, came to me and reported that I had been slandered among the peltasts and that some were threatening that, if they caught me, they would kill[353] me.

I contrive my salvation as follows.[354] I send to Archytas and my other friends in Tarentum, explaining the [circumstances] in which I happen to be. They, furnishing some pretext of an embassy, send from their city [350b] a thirty-oared ship and one of their own, Lamiscus,[355] who, when he came, begged Dionysius concerning my case, saying that I wished to go away and [telling him] to do in no manner otherwise. He agreed and, having given [me] a travel allowance, sent [me] away. Neither was I asking for the return of any of Dion's money, nor did anyone give it back.

When I came to Olympia in the Peloponnese and caught up with Dion, who was spectating[356] [at the games], I reported to him the things that had happened. He, calling Zeus as his witness, straightaway gave

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[352] *Tōn huperesiōn* can mean either "the servants" or "the rowers in the fleet." Harward 1932 opts for the latter reading with the following explanation: "The ships' crews here mentioned belonged to the navy of Dionysius. The ships which he kept permanently in commission would be manned by paid crews, and it is interesting to observe that some of the men were enlisted at Athens" (221 n 137). However, it is also possible that Plato is referring to Athenian members of the Syracusan servant class.

[353] "[K]ill" does not translate a form of *apokteinō*, the word usually rendered by "kill," but here of *diaphtheirō*; see n xxxx above [320e].

[354] Plato adds liveliness to his narrative here by use of the historical present.

[355] This Lamiscus is otherwise unknown.

[356] See n xxxx above [315b].

word to me and to my [350c] intimates and friends to prepare to take vengeance on Dionysius in gratitude, in our case, for the cheating of guest-friends[357]—for so he said and thought—and in his case, for an unjust casting out and exile. Having listened [to him], I directed him to call upon my friends if he wished. "But as for me," I said, "you, together with the others, by force, in a way, made me a sharer of meals, and a sharer of hearth, and a partner in sacred rites with Dionysius, who may have led many of the slanderers [saying] that I, together with you, was plotting against him and the tyranny—and nonetheless he did not kill me, [350d] but showed mercy.[358] At any rate, I am hardly of an age any longer to be joining in war; and you [pl] have me in common should you [pl] ever, being in some need of friendship with each other, wish to do some good; but for so long as you [pl] should desire evils, call upon others." I said these things having hated my wandering about Sicily and ill-fortune; but they were unpersuaded,[359] and, not having been persuaded by my [attempts at] reconciliation,[360] they came to be responsible for all the evils that have now come to be for them, [350e] none of which would ever have come to be, so far as the human things go at least, if Dionysius had given back to Dion his money or altogether reconciled with him—for I would have easily been holding Dion back both by wishing and by the power I had—but as it is they, having set out against one another, have had their fill of every evil.

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[357] The compound word *xenapatia*, "cheating of guest-friends" i.e., of *xenous* (see n xxxx above), appears to be a Platonic coinage. At any rate, it does not appear anywhere but here in any extant text.

[358] Lit. "stood in awe" or "acted with reverence" (*ēidesthē*); see n xxxx above [323b].

[359] Or "they disobeyed" (*apeithountes*), just as "not having been persuaded" later in this sentence could also be "not having obeyed" (*ou peithomenoi*).

[360] The main text of the best MSS. reads "conversations" (*dialexesin*) instead of "[attempts at] reconciliation" (*diallaxesi*), the emendation suggested in marginal comments and by later MSS. The word for "reconciliation" here and below is to be distinguished from *oikeiotēta* at 317e above (see n xxxx).

[351a] And yet Dion held the very same wish that I myself would say is needed, for me as for someone else: whoever is measured concerning his own power and friends, and concerning his own city, would intend, by doing the greatest benefactions, to come into the greatest power and honors. But this would not be possible if someone were to make himself, [his] companions, and [his] city rich by plotting and by bringing together conspirators, if he is poor and not does not have control over himself, and is defeated by cowardice in the face of pleasures; [351b] or if he, killing the possessors of property and calling these enemies, should carry away their money and direct his accomplices and companions [to do] whatever [they will], asserting that no one should accuse him if [any of them] will be poor. And it is the same if someone is honored by the city for doing benefactions for her by apportioning to the many the things of the few by means of measures passed by majority vote, or, having come to the fore of a great city, which rules many lesser ones, if he should apportion the money of the smaller ones to his own city [351c] not according to justice. For neither Dion nor anyone else ever voluntarily goes for power that is accursed[361] for him and his race[362] for all time, but rather for a regime and the establishment of the most just and best laws [all] to come to be through not even the fewest deaths and murders.[363]

These things Dion was now doing, having preferred[364] the suffering impious deeds above the doing of them, yet being very careful not to suffer them; nevertheless he stumbled, having come to the peak of his

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[361] See n xxxx above [336b].

[362] Or "family" (*genei*); see n xxxx above [326b].

[363] Marginal emendations in the best MSS. suggest the word "murders" (*phonōn*) should instead be "exiles" (*phugōn*).

[364] Lit. "having honored more highly" (*protimēsas*).

overcoming of his [351d] enemies, suffering nothing amazing. For, concerning the impious, a pious human being, both moderate and sensible, will never be wholly deceived concerning the soul of such as they—but perhaps it would not be amazing if he should suffer the experience of a good pilot: a coming storm would not altogether escape his notice, but the extraordinary[365] and unexpected magnitude of a storm could escape his notice and, having escaped it, inundate him by force. The same thing also brought down Dion; for it hardly escaped his notice that the ones who brought him down were evil, but the height of unlearnedness[366] [351e] to which they had attained, and of depravity and gluttony, did escape his notice,[367] and having been brought down by it, he lies, having engulfed Sicily in ten-thousandfold sorrow.

[352a] The things that I counsel after what has now been spoken have nearly been spoken by me; let them have been [fully] spoken. As for those things for the sake of which I took back up my second arrival in Sicily, it seemed to me that it necessarily needed to be spoken because of the strangeness and unreasonableness of the things that happened. But if what was now spoken appeared more reasonable to someone and seemed to him to provide sufficient pretexts for the things that happened, then the things that have now been spoken would [have been spoken] in a measured and sufficient manner for us.

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[365] Lit. "beyond what is ordained," "inauspicious" (*exaision*).

[366] See n xxxx above [336b].

[367] Accepting the emendation offered by a second hand in one of the best MSS. and preferred by Burnet and Souilhé. Note, however, that Souilhé mistakenly claims that his preferred reading also appears in the main text of the best MSS., which it does not. The main text reads *etuchon* instead of *elathon*, which might be translated "but the height of unlearnedness to which they had attained, and of depravity and gluttony, did happen [to escape his notice]…"

Letter Eight

[352b] Plato to the intimates and companions of Dion: Do well!

The things by intending which you[368] would most of all really do well—these I will attempt to go through for you as much as is in [my] power. I hope to counsel the things that are advantageous not for you alone, but most of all, to be sure, for [352c] you, and second for all those in Syracuse, but third for your enemies and adversaries, except for any of them who may have become a doer of impious deeds; for these things are incurable, and one can never purge them away. Think about what I am now saying.[369]

Throughout all of Sicily, the tyranny having been dissolved, all is battle for you concerning these very things, some wishing to take up the rule again, others to put the finishing touch on the escape from tyranny. Correct counsel concerning such things [352d] seems to the many on every occasion to be to counsel the things that need to be done so that the most evils will be accomplished for their adversaries and the most goods for their friends; but it is in no way easy for one doing many evils to others not also to suffer many further ones himself. And there is no need to go anywhere far away to see such things clearly, but so many have now come to be in this way right there all about Sicily, some undertaking to do [them], others to defend against [352e] the doers; and by telling tales[370] about these things to others, you would come to be sufficient teachers on every occasion. Indeed, [one] is hardly at a loss for these things; but how many of them would come to be either advantageous for all, both enemies and friends, or as little evil as possible

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[368] Plato employs the second person plural throughout this letter.

[369] Or "Think about what I now mean" (*Noēsate de ha legō nun*).

[370] I avoid the near transliteration "mythologizing" as a translation for *muthologountes*, though it would not be altogether inappropriate.

for both, these things are neither easy to see, nor, having been seen, to bring to completion, but such counsel and undertaking of reason resembles a prayer. Let it be altogether, then, [353a] a certain prayer—for one ought always to speak and think, in all things, beginning from the gods—and would that it be brought to completion by signaling to us the following sort of account.

Over you and your adversaries, now and nearly continuously[371] from the very [moment] the war came to be, one family[372] rules, which your fathers set up when they had come to be altogether at a loss: it was when an extreme danger came to be for Greek Sicily, that it would be wholly overrun by Carthaginians and thoroughly barbarized. For they then chose Dionysius [353b] for the actions of war that befit him, on the grounds that he was young and skilled in warfare, and an elder, Hipparinus,[373] as a counselor, [and both], for the salvation of Sicily, as "autocrats," as they say, naming them tyrants. And whether one wishes to hold that it turned out to be divine fortune and a god, or the virtue of the rulers, or even both of these together with the citizens of that time that came to be the cause of salvation, let it be in whatever way one assumes; thus did there turn out to be salvation for those who then came to be. Such things [353c] as these having come to be, then, it is presumably just for everyone to have gratitude for the saviors; but if in the time thereafter the tyranny has not correctly made use of the gift from the city, it has [paid] some of the just penalties for these things—let it pay the others.

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[371] Lit. "through to the end" (*dia telous*).

[372] "[F]amily" here translates the word that is otherwise translated by "kin" or "kinship" (*suggenneia*).

[373] Father of Dion; on the various Syracusan Hipparini, see n xxxx above [3254].

What just penalties, then, would necessarily come to be correct on the basis of their situation? If you were able to escape them easily and without great dangers or toils, or they to take back the rule without trouble, I would not be able to counsel the things that are about to be spoken. [353d] Both of you[374] ought now to think of and to remember how often you have each come to be in hope of at last[375] supposing that you are in need—[it is] almost always [this way]— of some small further thing in order to do everything to [your] liking,[376] and moreover, that this small thing turns out every time to come to be the cause of ten thousand great evils; and no limit ever puts an end [to it], but an old end seems always to be joined to a new, naturally growing beginning, and [353e] both the entire tyrannical and the popular race[377] will be in danger of being completely destroyed[378] by this circle, and all Sicily, if any of the likely and abominable things should come to be, will come to be nearly devoid of the Greek language, changing into some power and might of Phoenicians or Opicans.[379] All the Greeks ought to provide a remedy[380] for these things with all eagerness. Now, if someone has something more

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[374] That is, the two rival factions.

[375] Lit. "now" (*nun*).

[376] Lit. "according to [your] mind" (*kata noun*).

[377] Or "class," "tribe" (*genos*); see n xxxx above [326b].

[378] There is disagreement between the best MSS. as to whether the word here is *diolesthai*, "completely destroyed" or *dielesthai*, "divided," "broken apart."

[379] To the south, the Carthaginians, who had long been the Syracusans' major rivals for power in Sicily, spoke a Phoenician language. The "Opicans," also called the Osci, were an Italic people to the north. Their Oscan language was also spoken by the Samnites, who at this time were competing with Rome for dominance over the central Italian mainland; in addition, Dionysius the Elder's practice of employing non-Greek Italian mercenaries may have led to the existence of some Opican presence in Sicily itself (see Morrow's note *ad loc*). Plato's wording leaves unclear whether he is speaking of Phoenician and Opican *peoples* or *languages*.

[380] "Provide a remedy" translates *temnein pharmakon*, literally "cut a drug." The idiom refers to the chopping up of a plant for medicinal use. Cf. *Laws* 836b3, 919b3-4.

correct and better than what will be said by me, [354a] he would be most correctly spoken of as a friend of the Greeks[381] if he brought it forward; what appears to me somehow at the moment, I will attempt to make clear in all frankness and by a certain common, just speech.

Indeed, conversing in a certain way as an arbiter[382] with the two [parties]—those who tyrannized and those who were tyrannized—and to each as one [individual], I speak my old counsel: even now, my speech at any rate would be a counsel to every tyrant to flee this name and deed and, if it should be possible, to change into a kingship. [354b] But it is possible, as Lycurgus showed by deed, a wise and good man who, having seen the race of his intimates in Argos and Messene arriving from the power of kings to that of tyrants, themselves being corrupted[383] as well as each city of each [one of them], and dreading at the same time for his own city and race, he brought in as a remedy the rule of the old and the bond of the Ephors, a salvation for the kingly rule,[384] so as to save it with glory for so many generations, [354c] since law became a sovereign king over human beings, and human beings not tyrants over laws.

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[381] "Friend of the Greeks" is *philellēn*, which nearly transliterates to the English word "philhellene," but the meaning of the Greek must not be confused with the various forms of "philhellenism" in later centuries.

[382] The word translated "arbiter" is *diaitētou*, related to the word I have otherwise consistently rendered "regimen" (*diaita*); see n xxxx above [330c]. It seems the sense of "regimen" developed from the arbiter's job of determining (i.e., regimenting) what one or each of two contending parties must do to for their dispute to be resolved.

[383] Or "destroyed" (*diaphtheirantas*); see n xxxx above [320e].

[384] Political power in the Spartan regime was shared between three major institutions: the two kings, the "Gerousia" or council of thirty elders, and the Ephorate, a council of five citizens elected by the full Spartan assembly. Plato's attribution to Lycurgus (see n xxxx above [320d]) of the latter two offices agrees with the account of Herodotus (I.65.5), but not with the account given by Plato's own Athenian Stranger in the *Laws* (691d8-2b1; see also Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 7.1). The claim that Lycurgus's lawgiving was prompted by his observation of what happened in the nearby cities of Argos and Messene is unique to the *Letters*, but cf. *Laws* 690d1-e5 in context.

Even now, then, my speech recommends [something] to everyone: to those aiming at tyranny [it recommends that they] turn away in flight and flee the purported happiness[385] of insatiably hungry and mindless human beings, attempt to change into the form[386] of kingship, and be enslaved to kingly laws, possessing the greatest honors both from human beings [who bestowed them] voluntarily and from the laws; [354d] to those pursuing character in accord with freedom and fleeing the yoke of slavery as being bad, I would counsel them to beware lest they should ever fall into the disease of their ancestors at an unpropitious moment out of insatiability for freedom, which [disease] they then suffered because of the excessive anarchy, making use of an unmeasured passionate love of freedom.[387] For the Siceliotes before Dionysius and Hipparinus had ruled were living happily, as they then supposed, [living] luxuriously and at the same time ruling the rulers; and they, casting [stones], stoned to death the ten generals preceding [354e] Dionysius, in no way judging according to law, in order that they should in no way be enslaved with either justice or law as a master, but be altogether free in every way; hence did the tyrannies over them come to be. For slavery and freedom are each, if carried too far, altogether bad, but if [each] is in measure, altogether good; but slavery to a god is measured, to human beings unmeasured; and law is a

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[385] The word for "purported happiness" (*eudaimonisma*) appears to be a Platonic coinage, and its intended meaning can only be inferred from the context. Strictly speaking, it is formed from the word for "happiness" (*eudaimonia*; see n xxxx above [336b]) and the suffix *-isma*, which generally denotes a finished product emerging from some productive process. Thus, one might well translate *eudaimonisma* as "state of happiness," in which case the sense "purported" is conveyed by sarcasm rather than explicitly.

[386] The word for "form" here is *eidos*, as in the famous Platonic doctrine of the "Forms" or "Ideas." The word occurs only once elsewhere in the *Letters*, at 322d5 above.

[387] The phrase "passionate love of freedom" translates *erōs eleutherias*. See n xxxx above [339e].

god to moderate human beings, [355a] pleasure to imprudent [human beings].[388]

These things being natural in this way, I recommend to the friends of Dion to explain to all Syracusans what I counsel, his and my common counsel; but I will interpret what he would [say] to you now, if he were breathing and able to speak. "What speech, then," someone might say, "would Dion's counsel bring to light for us concerning the things that are present now?" The following one.

"Accept, O Syracusans, first of all laws which [355b] would appear to you not to turn your judgments, together with your desire, toward money-making and riches, but—there being three things, soul, and body, and then money—to make the virtue of the soul most honored, second that of the body lying under that of the soul, and third and last the honor of money, being enslaved to both body and soul. And [355c] the ordained law that achieves these things would be laid down correctly for you, completing as really happy those who use it; but the speech that names the wealthy 'happy' is both wretched itself, being a mindless speech of women and children, and achieves [wretchedness] for such as who are persuaded by it. That these things I recommend are true, you will recognize by deed if you taste the things now being said concerning laws; this seems to come to be the truest test concerning all things.

"Having accepted such laws, [355d] since danger has taken hold of Sicily and you are neither prevailing sufficiently nor, in turn, have you been surpassingly prevailed over, perhaps it would come to be just and advantageous for all of you to cut down the middle, both for you who

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[388] "Moderate" and "imprudent" translate *sōphrosin* and *aphrosin* respectively. The root, "*phro-*," which refers to thinking or thought (from the root *phrēn*, "mind"), is common to both (see n xxxx above [310e]); they might be translated "sound-minded" and "mindless" to reflect this.

are fleeing the harshness of rule and for those passionately desiring[389] to hit upon rule again, whose ancestors then saved the Greeks from barbarians in the greatest way so that it is possible now to make speeches about regimes; had they perished then, neither speech nor hope would have remained in any place or in any way.

"Now, then, [355e] let there come to be freedom with kingly rule for some and accountable kingly rule for the others, laws being masters both of the other citizens and of the kings themselves if they should do anything illegal; and on all these terms, by means of judgement that is without trickery and sound, together with gods, set up as king, first, my son, for the sake of gratitude for two things, the [one] from me and the [other] from my father—for he freed the city from barbarians in his time, [356a] and I from tyranny twice now, of which things you yourselves have come to be witnesses;[390] second, make king the one possessing the same name as my father, the son of Dionysius, in gratitude for his coming to [your] aid now and his pious way;[391] though his father came to be a tyrant, he voluntarily sets the city free, acquiring honor for himself and his race that will live forever in place of an ephemeral and unjust tyranny. Third, you ought to propose that he become king of the Syracusans—a voluntary [king] of a voluntary city—[who is] now the ruler of your [356b] adversaries' camp, Dionysius, son of Dionysius, if he should be willing voluntarily to be removed [and changed] into the shape of a king, dreading his fortunes, and pitying [his] fatherland for its neglected

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[389] "Passionately desiring" translates *erōsin*; see n. xxxx above [354d].

[390] Dion's father was Hipparinus, whose deeds are discussed just above at 353a4-c4. Dion's son was also named Hipparinus, but later historians claim that he had committed suicide by the time of this letter; see n xxxx above [324a].

[391] The man mentioned here is yet a *third* Hipparinus (see n xxxx above [324a]). This one, son of Dionysius the Elder, had by the time of this letter become the leader of Dion's party at Syracuse.

temples and graves, lest, on account of love of victory, he should destroy everything in every way, coming to be a source of joy to barbarians.

"Establish kings, three [in number]—either giving them the [full] Laconian power[392] or taking something away [from it], having come to an agreement together—in some way such as the following, [356c] which has been said to you also earlier, but nevertheless listen now yet again. If the race of both Dionysius and Hipparinus should be willing, for the salvation of Sicily, to put a stop to the evils that are now present, receiving honors for themselves and for their race both in the time to come and now, then on these terms, just as has also been said before, call in ambassadors whom they would be willing to make authorities over the reconciliations—[men] from there, from without, or both—as many as they should agree[393] [to call in]; when they come, [356d] let them set down laws and the sort of regime in which it is consonant for kings to come to be authorities over sacred things and however many others are fitting for those who have once come to be benefactors, but let them make guardians of the laws[394] as rulers of war and peace, thirty-five in number, together with both demos and council.[395] [Let there be] other lawcourts for other [penalties], but let the thirty-five initiate [cases involving penalties of] death and exile; in addition to these, let judges always come to be selected from among the rulers of the previous year,

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[392] That is, the power of the Spartan kings. Laconia was the region in which Sparta was located.

[393] The word for "agree" here (*sugchōrēsōsin*) is elsewhere translated "concede."

[394] "Guardians of the Laws" (*nomophulakas*) is the title Plato's Athenian Stranger gives to one of the highest offices he creates for the city discussed in the *Laws*, though there they number thirty-seven instead of thirty-five; see especially Book Six for the description of that office.

[395] The demos of a Greek *polis* was comprised of the totality of its citizenry, what might later have been called "the commons." In a democracy, the demos expressed its political will in the "assembly" (*ekklēsia*). Even in democracies, however—and also in other regimes—it was common to have a separate institution known as a *boulē* ("council" or "senate"), formed of a more manageable subset of citizens, empowered to deal with daily administrative affairs.

[356e] one from each ruling office, he who seems to be best and most just; for the following year, let them judge the citizens' [cases involving penalties of] death, imprisonment, and removal [from the city];[396] but let it not be possible for a king to come to be a judge [in cases involving] these sorts of just penalties, [357a] since he, like a priest, is to be pure of murder, imprisonment, and exile.

"I intended for these things to come to be for you while I lived and I intend them now, and once I, together with you, had prevailed over our enemies, [then,] had guest-friend Furies[397] not prevented [me], I would have set [things] up in the very way I intended, and after these things, had deeds followed upon thought,[398] I would have recolonized the rest of Sicily, taking from the barbarians—so many as did not carry on the war against the tyranny on behalf of the common freedom—what they now have, [357b] recolonizing the previously inhabited Greek places in the ancient and patrimonial habitations;[399] I counsel everyone in common even now to intend and to do these same things and to call everyone toward these actions, and to consider him who is not willing a common adversary. And these things are not impossible; for those things that happen to be in two souls and come readily to those who have calculated to find [the] best things—the one judging these things to be impossible hardly [357c] thinks well.

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[396] For the difference between "exile" and "removal" from the city, see n. xxxx above [338b]

[397] The Furies were ancient goddesses believed to wreak divine vengeance upon human beings who had committed great offenses, especially those involving the failure to uphold solemn duties or obligations. As the phrase "guest-friend Furies" implies (*xenikai erinues*), these included the obligations of *xenia*, guest-friendship; see n xxxx above [316c].

[398] Lit. "mind" (*nōi*).

[399] In this sentence, the word for "recolonize" (*katoikizō*) is closely related to the words for "inhabited" (*oikētas*) and "habitations" (*oikēseis*); the shared root is *oik-*, as in *oikos*, "house" (see nn xxxx and xxx above [317e and 323e]). For the idea of recolonizing the Greek cities, see 319c7-d2, 331e2-1a3, as well as n xxxx above [315d].

"But I say that these two [souls] are that of Hipparinus, the son of Dionysius, and that of my own son; for I suppose that, these two having agreed, all these things will also be so resolved[400] by all the other Syracusans who are solicitous for the city. But, having given honors, together with prayers, to all gods and to as many others for whom, together with gods, it is fitting, do not leave off persuading and making proposals to friends and those [with whom you are] in conflict, softly and in every way, until [357d] you shall have succeeded in completing the things that have now been said by us, like divine dreams set before ones who are awake, [by making them] clear and fortunate."[401]

[400] See n xxxx above [346b].

[401] The last word of this letter, which I here translate "fortunate," is the adjective *eutuchē*. It is a form of the very same word that also ends Letters Four, Five, and Eleven, the imperative verb *eutuchei*, which I translate "Good luck!"

Letter Nine

Plato to Archytas the Tarantine:[402] Do well!

Those close to Archippus and Philonides[403] arrived at our place [357e] bearing the letter which you gave them and reporting the things from you. They accomplished the things to do with the city without difficulty—for it was not altogether laborious—but the [reports] from you got around to us, saying that you are restless because you are not able to be released from the lack of leisure connected with the common things. That the most pleasant thing in life is to do one's own thing, [358a] especially if someone should choose to do things of such a sort as you too [have chosen], is clear to nearly everyone; but you need to take the following to heart as well: that it is not only for oneself that each of us has been born,[404] but one's fatherland gets a certain portion of our birth,[405] one's parents [get] another, and the rest of one's friends [get] another, and many are given also to the propitious moments that overtake our life. When the fatherland itself calls one to the common things, perhaps it is strange not to hearken; [358b] for that turns out at the same time to leave a space for petty human beings, who do not go to the common things from the best [motive].

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[402] On Archytas, see n xxxx above [338c].

[403] Two Pythagorean philosophers belonging to Archytas's philosophic circle at Tarentum; they are included in Iamblichus's list of Pythacgoreans from Tarentum (*De Vita Pythagorica Liber* 267).

[404] Lit. "has come to be" (*gegonen*).

[405] Lit. "of our coming-into-being" (*tēs geneseōs hēmōn*).

[That is] sufficient for these things. We are caring even now for Echecrates and will do so in the time to come because of you, and because of his father, Phrynion, and because of the youth himself.[406]

[406] Echcecrates is the name of the man to whom Phaedo narrates the conversation that took place on the day of Socrates' death in Plato's *Phaedo*. This man, known as Echecrates of Phlius, was "a Pythagorean and a pupil of Philolaus and Eurytus, who in their later life taught at Tarentum" (Morrow 259 n3). However, Nails argues Echecrates of Phlius could hardly have been a "youth" at the time of the writing of Letter Nine. There was another Echecrates, perhaps related to the first, who, like Archippus and Philonides (above), is mentioned by Iamblichus in his list of Pythagoreans from Tarentum (*De Vita Pythagorica Liber* 267).

Letter Ten

Plato to Aristodorus: Do well!

[358c] I hear from Dion that you are now, and have come to be through everything, among those who are most of all his companions, exhibiting a character that is the wisest one with a view to philosophy; for it is the steadfast, faithful, and healthy that I myself claim is the true philosophy, and as for the other wisdoms and clevernesses, which extend to other things, I suppose that I name [them] correctly by calling them "niceties."[407] But be strong[408] and remain in the very characters in which you now remain.

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[407] Plato here employs an unusual noun, *kompsotētas*. Isocrates uses the word to refer to refined or ornate literary and rhetorical style (*Panathenaicus* 12.1). The word is formed from the adjective *kompsos*, for which the LSJ suggests "nice," "refined," "subtle," "clever," etc., and which appears twice in the *Letters* (318b6, 361a4).

[408] See n xxxx above [310b].

Letter Eleven

[358d] Plato to Laodamas:[409] Do Well!

I sent a letter to you before as well, [saying] that it makes a great difference, with respect to all the things you say, for you to come to Athens yourself; but since you claim that it is impossible, second after this would have been if I or Socrates[410] were able to come—just as you wrote [in] a letter. But right now, [358e] Socrates is ill with strangury;[411] and as for me, it would be unseemly if, having arrived there, I should not accomplish the very things for the purpose of which you are calling upon me. But I do not have much hope that these things would come to be—for them, there would be need of a long, other letter, which would thoroughly go through everything—and at the same time, I, because of my age, am not in a sufficient condition in my body to be wandering and undergoing dangers of the sort that are everywhere, by land and by sea; and now everything pertaining to journeys[412] is full of dangers.

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[409] Nothing else is known of this Laodamas. Diogenes Laertius speaks of a similarly-named geometer, Leodamas of Thasos, said to have studied with Plato and to have learned from him the investigative procedure of "analysis" (III.24), explained by Proclus as the method which "traces the thing being sought up to an agreed-upon principle (*archēn*)" (*On Euclid*, 211.19-21). It has been suggested that this Leodamas, his name having been misspelled, is the addressee of this letter, but the grounds for supposing so are fairly thin (see Nails, 184; Harward, 228; Morrow, 260 n1).

[410] Since Plato, who was in his twenties when Socrates died, makes excuse of his advanced age in this letter (358e5-6), it is generally thought that this reference must be to the "Younger Socrates" of Plato's *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman*. If so, this is the only extant reference to him by any contemporary outside of those dialogues, with one exception: Aristotle refers to (and rejects) a philosophical position the "Younger Socrates" used to hold at *Metaphysics* 1036b25 (see Granger 2000, 415 n1)d. It has only rarely been considered that this may be a sort of joking—and consciously anachronistic—reference to Socrates himself; see Wohl 1998, 63-5.

[411] As Nails explains, "strangury (*stranguria*: strangled urine) is a condition in which an obstruction causes urine to be discharged spasmodically and painfully, drop by drop" (2002, 269). Cf. Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* 617.

[412] Or "everything in the travelling routes" (*panta ... en tais poreiais*).

However, I have counsel to give [359a] you and the colonists, which, "after I have said it," says Hesiod, "might seem to be paltry, but it is difficult to think."[413] For if they suppose[414] that, by the giving of any laws whatsoever, a city[415] would ever be well established without the existence of some authority caring for the daily regimen[416] in the city, in what way it might be both moderate and manly for both slaves and free, they do not intend[417] correctly. Now, this [authority], if there are already men worthy [359b] of this office, might come to be; but if there is need of someone to educate, you will have neither he who will educate nor they who will be educated, as I suppose, but what remains is for you to pray to the gods. And in fact the earlier cities too were established in nearly this way and were well managed thereafter under the coming to be of conjunctions of great affairs, both in war and in the other actions, whenever, at the propitious moments, a man both noble and good intervened having great power; [359c] one ought and is compelled to be eager for them[418] beforehand, yet to intend them such as I say, and not to

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[413] This line does not appear in Hesiod's extant works, and, as Morrow observes, "its meaning [is] uncertain" (ad loc.). "Paltry" (*phaulon*) could also be rendered "simple" here. The final phrase, "is difficult to think" (*chalepon noēsai*) has been reasonably given by various translators as "is difficult to understand" (Post), "is hard to take" (Morrow), or "was difficult to think of" (Harward).

[414] The reading "they suppose" (*oiontai*) appears in several of the later MSS. The earliest and generally best have instead *oion te*, which leaves the sentence grammatically difficult. Translators have universally adopted the former reading.

[415] In both of the best MSS., marginal emendations indicate that "a city would" (*polin an*) is a textual corruption from "a regime" (*politeian*). The alternative reading would be, "For if they suppose that, by the giving of any laws whatsoever, a regime was ever well established…"

[416] Or "way of living" (*diaitēs*); see n xxxx above [330c].

[417] Or "understand" (*dianoountai*); see n xxxx above [315d].

[418] The only grammatically valid antecedent of this "them" (*auta*) would seem to be the "great affairs" mentioned above.

be mindless by supposing something will be readily accomplished. Good luck.

Letter Twelve

Plato to Archytas the Tarentine: Do well!

We received the reminders[419] that have come from you [359d] amazingly gladly and we admire the one who wrote them to the very greatest extent; and the man seemed to us to be worthy of his ancient ancestors, for indeed these men are said to be myriad[420]—they were among all those expelled from Troy in the time of Laomedon[421]—good men, as the myth

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[419] "Reminders" translates the word *hupomnēmata*, a word that often refers to texts written for the purpose of preserving a record of something—what we might call "memoranda." Michael Frede (Burnyeat and Frede 2015) has made the use of this word in this letter a key point of his argument against the letter's authenticity (20, 24-5), and has in turn made the alleged inauthenticity of this letter a key point in his argument against the authenticity of the whole *Letters* (23-4). His argument hinges upon the claim that "[t]he meaning or use of this term [viz. *hupomnēmata*] is rather difficult to determine and to explain. One thing which is clear is that it excludes dialogues and speeches," a claim that he bases on a line in Diogenes Laertius. But this supposition is mistaken. Pappas (2016, 40-1) has noted that Plato evidently suggests that his dialogues may have the purpose of being such "reminders" at *Phaedrus* 276d3; consider also 278a1. The same word appears three other times in the *Letters*: once just below at 359d6, and also in Letters Seven (344d9) and Thirteen (363e4). The instance in Letter Seven especially should be compared with the passages of the *Phaedrus* cited in this note.

[420] The Greek word *murioi* literally means "ten thousand," though it is often used figuratively to mean something like "countless" (as the English "myriad"). However, it is also possible that the word Plato uses here is a demonym of identical spelling, "Myrians." Our uncertainty as to which of these is intended reflects the fact that neither reading is easily intelligible; we know neither to what "ten thousand" or "myriad" ancestors Plato could be referring, nor who these "Myrians" would have been. See Harward, 230 n2; Burnyeat and Frede, 19.

[421] Frede's explanation of this reference is succinct, insightful, and comprehensive: "Laomedon is obviously the king of Troy, father of Priam, repeatedly referred to in the *Iliad*, but also for instance in Apollodorus' *Biblotheca*. What is relevant for our purposes is that Laomedon brought disaster upon Troy in the following way. He hired Apollon and Poseidon to build the walls of Troy, but once they had finished the task he refused to pay them; whereupon Poseidon sent a terrible sea monster which could only be appeased by being offered Laomedon's daughter Hesione. Heracles agrees to kill the sea monster, and thus to save Hesione, if Laomedon refuses to give him the promised horses; Heracles with an army captures Troy. In the aftermath of this Priam becomes king of Troy. So there are two falls of Troy: the one under Laomedon and the other under Priam. So the *Μύριοι* [as Frede has it, the "Myrians"; as I have translated it, the "myriad" ancestors of the author of the "reminders" sent by Archytas to Plato] are obviously people who leave Troy in the events which lead up to the first fall of Troy or after this fall.

that has been handed down makes clear. But the reminders from me, about which you sent a letter, are not yet in sufficient condition, but I have dispatched[422] them to you in whatever condition they happen to be in; [359d] and concerning the guarding,[423] the both of us are in accord, so that there is no need for exhorting.[424]

(Note the contrast between *τῶν ἐπὶ Λαομέδοντος ἐξαναστάντων Τρώων* and *τῶν ἐπὶ Πριάμου ἐξαναστάντων Τρώων*)" (Burnyeat and Frede 2015, 19-20).

[422] "I have dispatched" translates *apestalka*; see n xxxx above [309b].

[423] On "the guarding" (*tēs phulakēs*), see Harwards's note ad loc.: "φυλακῆς has been explained as a reference to Plato's guardians in the *Republic*. It is more likely that the word simply means the custody of the notes. We may suppose that Plato and Archytas were agreed that notes on important philosophical questions ought not to be allowed to fall into the hands of such a person as Dionysios."

[424] Lit. "recommending" (*parakeleuesthai*).

Letter Thirteen

It is denied that [this is] by Plato.[425]

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[425] My decision to print this line here at the beginning of Letter Thirteen rather than at the end of Letter Twelve requires explanation. The sentence appears in almost all the MSS., including the oldest and best, not in the margin, nor even set off from the body of the letter in any way, but as though it were the final sentence of Letter Twelve. However, as Hackforth correctly acknowledged in 1913, "There seems to be no means of deciding whether the note … belongs to xii or xiii" (163). That is, the manner in which early copies of the *Letters* were transcribed would have made it difficult for copyists to discern where the line belonged, so that the text of even our oldest MSS. are more likely to reflect the best guesses of some earlier editors than anything else. For his part, Hackforth notes his agreement with Burnet that the line should be appended to the end of Letter Twelve "because it is very much more natural to suspect xii to be spurious than xiii." This fundamentally debatable judgment is characteristic of the criteria used by scholars to decide on the line's correct placement. Two of the earliest readers to raise objections regarding the authorship of some of Plato's letters were Marsilio Ficino (1484) and Ralph Cudworth (1678), both of whom especially suspected Letter Thirteen and took the line "It is denied that [this is] by Plato" as corroborating their suspicions; though we should note that Bentley, even as he rejected Cudworth's arguments against the authenticity of Letter Thirteen, made no objection against the presumption that the line pertained to Thirteen and not Twelve (1838, 409-13). This helps to show how influential was Burnet's editorial decision over later work on the *Letters*.

It is my view that the migration of scholarly opinion toward consensus with the judgment of Burnet and Hackforth has belied the genuine openness of the question of this line's proper placement. Of course, the widely adopted caution regarding the value of this attestation of doubt—whatever letter it refers to—is justified: if indeed this line was added to the MSS by some scribe or editor and therefore attests to the existence of doubt, even in ancient times, as to the authorship of one of the Platonic letters, it must also be said that we cannot know just *how* ancient that doubt was (see, e.g., Burnyeat and Frede 2015, 6). We only know that it is at least as old as our oldest MS., i.e., no later than the ninth century. It is therefore not necessarily an indication of any doubt expressed or shared by readers contemporary with Plato or with his immediate successors, and the weight of this testimony must be weighed against, for example, that of Diogenes Laertius who, in the 5th century, attests to the authenticity of both Letters Twelve and Thirteen.

More to the point, however, is the vastly under-considered possibility that this line is itself an *authentic* part of the original *Letters*. Certainly, this is not a hypothesis that can in any meaningful way be proven, and readers of this edition should bear strongly in mind the traditional view that the line, "It is denied that [this is] by Plato," is indeed a report of a certain opinion held about either Letter Twelve or Letter Thirteen centuries after Plato's death. But as we entertain the hypothesis that the *Letters* is a unitary work of Platonic political philosophy—one which bears as a motif an "obsessive concern with [its] own authenticity" (Wohl 1998, 84), and more than once enigmatically seems to deny the genuine Platonic authorship of Plato's other

[360a] Plato to Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse: Do well!

Let the beginning of this letter be at the same time also a token[426] to you that it is from me. Once, when you were hosting a feast for the Locrian youths,[427] you, who had been reclining at a distance from me, rose, [came] over to me, and, being in a friendly way, spoke some phrase that was well put as it seemed to me at least and [360b] to the one reclining

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writings—we should recognize that it would not be out of place for its author to have set this riddling line at the head of Letter Thirteen. Indeed, Letter Thirteen is, of all the letters in this collection, the most explicitly concerned with its own genuineness: it begins with an attempt to establish its Platonic provenance (360a3 ff), and even includes a claim that this letter, and all of Plato's letters, are preceded by a secret sign, agreed upon by the correspondents, meant to distinguish genuine communications from decoys (363b1-6; note especially the use of *sumbolon* as explained in n xxxx below [360a]). Moreover, if indeed Letter Thirteen has been written as the final chapter of this unusual epistolary novel, it represents a stunning collection of surprise twists and apparent contradictions of the impressions given by earlier letters—I leave it to the reader to explore and discover all the ways in which this is so. Let it suffice to say that it is indeed Letter Thirteen that is the most likely to cause alarm in readers who had formed their notion of Plato's affairs in Syracuse by reading the preceding letters. Indeed, that sense of alarm has led many readers and scholars over the centuries to suspect the letter's authenticity.

For all of these reasons, I consider it more likely that the line, "It is denied that [this is] by Plato"—whatever its origin—belongs to the beginning of Letter Thirteen than to the end of Letter Twelve, and that the reader should be encouraged to consider what it may have meant for Plato to have placed it here as a delightfully provocative literary device.

[426] The word "token" translates *sumboulon*—the origin of the English "symbol"—a word that appears here, at 363b1 below, and nowhere else in the *Letters* (but cf. n xxxx below [362d]). *Sumbola* were originally used as a means of confirming the identity of two contracting parties or their representatives. Upon their agreement, the parties would break an item in two and each take one piece as a *sumbolon*, which could thereafter be presented, say by a messenger or representative, to prove that the message in fact came from the other party. The word thereafter came to refer also to other means of proving authenticity (such as wax seals and certain kinds of identity tokens), and could sometimes refer to a pre-arranged "secret signal" or "password." One should consider especially Plato's use of the word at 363b1 below.

[427] Locris was a Greek city on the Italian mainland with several points of connection to Plato and the Syracusan story of the *Letters*. Dionysius the Younger's mother, Doris, was from Locris (Plutarch, *Dion* 3, 6), as was the physician Philistion apparently referred to in Letter Three above (314e; see n xxxx)—this Philistion, moreover, was among the teachers of Eudoxus, mentioned just below, who also studied with Archytas and eventually, as it seems, with Plato at the Academy (see n xxxx below [360c]). It should also be noted that the Platonic character Timaeus, of the *Timaeus* and *Critias*, is said to be from Locris (*Timaeus* 20a1-3; cf. *Laws* 638a7-b3).

next [to me]—and he was one of the beautiful ones—who then said, "Presumably, O Dionysius, you are much benefited in wisdom by Plato." And you said, "And in many other things, since even from the [moment of] his very summons, because of the very [fact] that I summoned him, straightaway I was benefited." This, then, must be preserved in such a way that the benefit to us from one another may always increase.

And I, so as to produce[428] this very [effect], am now sending you both some of the Pythagorean things[429] and some of the divisions,[430] as well as a man, just as was resolved by us then, [360c] of whom at least you and Archytas, if indeed Archytas has come to you, would be able to make use.[431] His name is Helicon, his race[432] is from Cyzicus, he is a student of

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[428] Or "prepare" as I have elsewhere translated *paraskeuazō*.

[429] Presumably these "things" are texts; but Plato's vagueness here is of a piece with a pattern throughout the *Letters* according to which he often uses an unspecified neuter plural to refer to doctrines, ideas, or other intellectual products of a school of thought, both his own and others'. See n xxxx above [313d].

[430] The influence of Pythagorean philosophy upon Plato's thought has long been recognized (see e.g., Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 987a29-31, b11-13, 23-25; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.17; Diogenes Laertius 3.6, 8-9), and it is generally understood that Plato's involvement with the Pythagorean school began with his trips to Italy, where Pythagorean thought flourished. Thus, although this is the only explicit reference to Pythagoras in the *Letters*, the significance for Plato's drama of Archytas and the philosophic circle he fostered in Tarentum has implicitly involved Archytas's well-known Pythagoreanism (see n xxxx above [338c]). Since the nineteenth century if not earlier, it has been speculated that the "Pythagorean things" to which Plato refers here would include Plato's *Timaeus*—a dialogue dominated by the fictional eponymous character, an ostensibly Pythagorean philosopher-ruler from Locris (see n xxxx above [360a])—and that the "divisions" (*diaireseōn*) would include Platonic dialogues such as the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, wherein the Eleatic Stranger—a follower Parmenides, who stood at the head of the *other* great Italian philosophic school in this day—demonstrates his technique of discovering definitions by dividing the whole through "dichotomies." See the notes of Souilhé, Harward, and Morrow *ad loc*.

[431] On Archytas, see n xxxx above [338c].

[432] Or "his family," (*genos*); see n xxxx above [326b]. Harward has, "[H]e belongs by birth to Kyzikos."

Eudoxus and is very smart[433] concerning the latter's things;[434] moreover, he came together[435] with a certain student of Isocrates, and with Polyxenus, one of Bryson's companions.[436] But, what is rare[437] in addition to these things, he is neither ungraceful to encounter nor is he like someone of bad character, but rather he would seem to be easy-going and of good character.[438] [360d] I say these things in dread because

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[433] Lit., "altogether graceful" (*panu charientōs echōn*).

[434] I.e., his teachings, doctrines, or philosophy; see nn xxxx and xxxx above [360b and 313d].

[435] "[C]ame together with" is literal for *suggegonen*, which may also connote more specifically the association of a student with a teacher.

[436] The only other extant reference to this Helicon is in Plutarch's *Life of Dion* (19.4). There he is said to have been a man close to Plato (a *sunēthēs*) who so impressed Dionysius the Younger by predicting a solar eclipse that the tyrant awarded him a talent of silver.

His teacher Eudoxus, on the other hand, has been described as "[t]he greatest of the classical Greek mathematicians and second only to Archimedes in all antiquity" (Kline 1972, 48). In addition to his breakthroughs in geometry, Eudoxus made important contributions to astronomy (specifically, he developed an elaborate astronomical model of concentric spheres to explain and predict the motions of the heavenly bodies), medicine, and moral philosophy (see van der Waerden 179-89 for extensive explanations of his mathematical and scientific theories; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1172b9-35 for an account of his position that pleasure is the good). He is said to have been taught by Archytas (see n xxxx above [338c]) and Philistius (see n xxxx above [314e]), and to have been a student and companion of Plato (Diogenes Laertius 8.8.86; Strabo 17.29; Proclus, *On Euclid* 67.2-3), and he was renowned for giving laws for his native Cnidus (Diogenes Laertius 8.8.88; Plutarch, *Adversus Colotem* 32).

Isocrates (436–338 BC), a contemporary of Plato, was an enormously famous and successful Athenian teacher and writer of political orations. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, the young Isocrates is said to be Socrates' companion, and Plato's Socrates has high praise for him (278e4-9b3). The kinship of Plato's Letter Seven to Isocrates' *Antidosis* has been noted and should be seriously considered (Post 58-61; Morrow 50-52; Harward 197).

On Polyxenus, see n xxxx above [310c].

Little is known of Bryson of Heraclea. He is criticized a few times by Aristotle for his "eristic" attempt to solve the geometric problem of squaring the circle (*Posterior Analytics* 75b40-6a3, *Sophistical Refutations* 171b16-2a7) and for his argument that there is no such thing as the use of foul language (*Rhetoric* 1405b6-16).

[437] The word translated "rare" is *spanion*, which was "scarce" twice in Letter One (310a2-4).

[438] "Of bad character" and "of good character" are here literal translations the antonyms *kakoēthēs* and *euēthēs*. The words have further connotations that should be considered. The

I am bringing to light an opinion concerning a human being—not a paltry animal, but one easily changeable, excepting some very few and with respect to few things. Since I was fearful and distrustful about him too, I myself was both examining [him] when I encountered [him] and inquiring of his fellow citizens, and no one said anything nasty about the man. But examine him yourself also and beware. Most of all, then, if you should in any way whatsoever have leisure, [360e] learn from him and also philosophize with respect to the other things; otherwise, have someone thoroughly taught [by him], so that, learning when there is leisure, you might come to be better and you might be well reputed, in such a way that your being benefited because of me will not let up. So much, then, for these things.

[361a] Concerning the things that you wrote a letter [telling] me to send to you, I had the Apollo made and Leptines is bringing it to you.[439] It is of a young and good craftsman; his name is Leochares.[440] Another work

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former may mean especially "malicious," and the latter often carries the negative meaning "naïve" or "simple-minded." Likewise, *elaphros*, literally "lightweight" and here rendered "easy-going," can also mean "simple-minded," but could also be translated "light-hearted" or "cheerful." The word appeared in Letter Two above, where it was translated "easy" (314e5).

[439] This Leptines (who is not to be confused with his father of the same name, brother to Dionysius the Elder), though mentioned in none of Plato's other letters, is evidently the one who is to convey this letter to Dionysius, and it seems throughout this letter that both Plato and Dionysius consider him a trustworthy associate; in this respect, he performs the function here in Letter Thirteen that Archedemus did in Letter Two (see n xxxx above [310b]). It has often been presumed, with reasonable cause, that this is the same man mentioned by Iamblichus as a Pythagorean from Syracuse (*Vita Pythagorica* 267). Certainly, this would seem to be the same Leptines who Diodorus Siculus says ruled Syracuse together with Dion's murderer Callippus (16.45.9), and who Plutarch claims later assassinated Callippus (*Dion* 57.6). Morrow's speculation (ad loc.) that this may have been the Leptines against whom Demosthenes directed his oration *Against Leptines* would require that this Leptines is in fact an Athenian, and so neither the Pythagorean mentioned by Iamblichus nor the nephew of Dionysius the Elder.

[440] Leochares, who would indeed still have been a "young craftsman" at the time of this letter, "became a sculptor of scarcely less celebrity than his contemporaries, Scopas [his teacher] and Praxitiles" (Harward 235 n10). Some sculptures thought to be Roman copies of his work, most notably the *Apollo Belvedere*, have been distinguished with the highest reputation among

of his was very nice[441] as it seemed [to me]; I therefore bought it, wishing to give it to your wife, because she cared for me both when I was healthy and when I was ailing in a manner worthy of both me and you. Give it to her then, unless something else should seem [good] to you.[442] I also send twelve jars of sweet wine for your children, and two of honey. [361b] But we came after the [season for] storing figs, and the myrtle-berries that had been preserved rotted; but we will take better care hereafter.[443] Leptines will tell you about the plants.[444]

I got the money[445] for these things—for the sake of both these things and certain taxes for the city—from Leptines, saying what seemed to me to be most decorous for us as well as being true to say: that what we spent on the Leucadian ship[446] was our own, nearly sixteen minae;[447] so I got this [money from Leptines], and having got it, I [361c] both used it myself and sent you [pl.] these things.

Next after this, hear about how things stand concerning your money, both yours at Athens and mine. I will use your money, as I was then saying to you, just as [I use] that of my other associates: I use as little as I

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classical works of art. It might be noted that the word translated "craftsman" here is *dēmiourgos*, the word Plato's Timaeus uses to describe his creator god (see e.g., *Timaeus* 28a6, 29a3, 40c1-2, 41a7).

[441] Or "refined," "clever," "skillful" (*kompson*).

[442] This phrase could equally mean, "unless it should seem to you to be something else" (*an mē ti soi allo doxēi*).

[443] Attic figs were renowned; see Athenaeus 14.67.

[444] The word for "plant," *phuton*, has the same root as the philosophically important word for "nature," *phusis*. This is the last occurrence of any cognate of *phusis* in the *Letters*.

[445] Lit. "silver" (*argurion*).

[446] Harward 1932 notes the suggestion of Ritter that "Leucadia" may have rather been the name of the ship (235 n12).

[447] A decent sum of money, roughly two and a half years' worth of wages for a skilled laborer such as a carpenter; see n xxxx above [347b], noting that there were sixty minae to a talent.

am able for as many things as seem, both to me and to him from whom I get it, to be necessary or just or decorous. The following sort of thing, then, has now fallen out for me. Of my nieces [361d] who died that time when I did not wear the wreath though you directed me to, there are four daughters: one is now marriageable, another is eight years old, another is a little beyond three years, another is not yet one year old.[448] They need to be given away [in marriage],[449] and this is for me and my associates [to do] for those to whose [marriageable ages] I survive; for those I do not, let them farewell.[450] As for those who should come to be with ones whose fathers are wealthier than I, they do not need to be given away; but at the moment, I am the most well-off of them, and I, [361e] together with others and with Dion, gave away their mothers. Now, one will marry Speusippus, since she is his sister's daughter. There is need in her case of no more than thirty minae; for this is a measured gift among us. Furthermore, if my mother should die, there would be need in turn of no more than ten minae for the building[451] of her tomb.[452] And concerning these things, these are pretty nearly my necessities at the moment; but if some other private or public expense should come to be because of my arrival at your [court], just as I was saying then, I need to strive to make it so that the expense should come

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[448] As has long been recognized, this sentence dates the letter fairly precisely. If this youngest of Plato's grandnieces is less than one year old, but her mother's death occurred while Plato was in Syracuse with Dionysius, then this must have been written considerably less than a year following Plato's return to Athens.

[449] The word for "need to be given away [in marriage]" is *ekdoteon*, which in this context implies above all the need to provide a dowry. This word appears twice more in the next sentence, where the connection to Plato's finances is made perfectly clear.

[450] The third person plural imperative form of the valediction I have translated "farewell" elsewhere in the *Letters* (*chairontōn*); cf. n xxxx above [315a].

[451] The word for "building" (*oikodomian*), just as in the English, may mean either the act of building or the edifice.

[452] On the value of a mina, see n xxxx above [361b].

to be as little as possible, [362a] but insofar as I am not able, the cost is yours.

Next after these things, concerning the expenditure of your money at Athens, I say that, first, if there should be some need for me to spend for a chorus or some such thing,[453] there is no guest-friend of yours who will give it, as we were supposing; and next, if it should make a great difference to you in some case, so that it will profit you for [money] to be spent immediately—whereas if it is not spent, but rather delayed until someone should come from you, it will harm [you]—such a thing, aside from the difficulty, would also be shameful for you. For indeed, I [362b] tested[454] these things, at least, by sending Erastus to Andromedes the Aeginetan,[455] from whom you directed me, your [pl.] guest-friend, to get something if I should need it, when you were wishing also for other greater things which you sent a letter [telling me] to send [to you]. But he said, appropriately and humanely, that when previously he spent [money] for your father he only barely recovered it, and that he would now give a small amount but not more. So I got [the money] from Leptines; and in this, at least, Leptines is worth praising, not because he gave, but because [he did so] eagerly, [362c] and in both saying and doing the other things [he has said and done] concerning you, it has been manifest that he has been able to be of service. For I ought to report, both with respect to such things as these and their opposites, of what sort each [person] appears to me [to be] in relation to you.

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[453] In Athens, wealthy residents were regularly called upon to pay for "liturgies" (*litourgiai*), i.e., to provide the funding for major public works. These included military expenditures, such as the outfitting of triremes, as well as cultural or artistic ones, such as the financing of choruses to be trained for musical productions at dramatic festivals.

[454] The word for "I tested" here is *exētasa*; elsewhere in the *Letters*, the word "test" always translates some form of the word *basanos*.

[455] On Erastus, see n xxxx above [322c]. Andromedes is otherwise unknown.

So, then, I will be frank with you concerning money; for it is just, and, at the same time, I would speak having experience of those around you. Every time those who report to you suppose they are bringing report of an expense, they are not willing to report [this], on the grounds that they will be arousing enmity; [362d] habituate and compel them, therefore, to explain these things, as well as the others; for you need both to know everything within [your] power and to be a judge, and not to flee from knowing. For of all things, [this] will be best for you with respect to your rule; for even you would say, and you will say, that it is good, both with respect to the other things and with respect to the acquisition of money itself, that the expenses be correctly spent and correctly returned. Therefore, let not those who assert that they are solicitous for you slander you to humanity;[456] for it is neither good nor noble for your reputation to seem to be hard to do business with.[457]

[362e] Next after these things I should speak about Dion. I shall not yet have [anything] to say with respect to the other things until the letters come from you, as you claimed [they would]; however, concerning those things which you were not allowing me to bring up to him, I neither brought [them] up nor conversed [about them], but I tried out whether he would bear the things that are coming to be hard or easily, and it seemed to me that he would be aggravated, and not without commotion, if it should come to be.[458] But with respect to the other

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[456] Lit. "to the human beings."

[457] The MSS. here are corrupt, and it is impossible to know for certain what was written. "[H]ard to do business with" translates *dussumbolon*, which was the suggestion of Schneider and stands as the most likely guess. In any case, it should be noted that *some* cognate of "*sumbolon*," translated "token" elsewhere in this letter (see n xxxx above [360a]), appears here. Because the *sumbolon* was used between two contracting parties, the word could also refer to the contract itself, and hence *dussumbolon* means something like "hard-bargaining" or "hard to do business with."

[458] For a suggestion as to what Plato may be referring to here, consider Plutarch, *Dion* 21.

things, Dion seems to me to be measured, in speech and in deed, concerning you.

[363a] To Cratinus, Timotheus' brother and my companion,[459] let us give a hoplite corslet,[460] [one] of the soft[461] ones for infantrymen, and to Cebes' daughters, three chitons seven cubits [in length],[462] not the expensive Amorgian ones but the Sicilian linen ones.[463] You probably recognize Cebes' name, for he is the one who was written about in the Socratic speeches conversing, together with Simmias, with Socrates in the speech about soul, a man who is both an intimate of, and bears goodwill toward us all.[464]

[363b] But now, concerning the token that pertains to the letters—all those letters I would send in seriousness and those I would not—I suppose that you remember it. But nevertheless, think about it and turn your mind very much toward it; for there are many directing [me] to

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[459] Of Cratinus, nothing else is known. His brother Timotheus (fl. ca. 375-360 BC), however, was an eminent Athenian general, and a friend and pupil of Isocrates (see *Antidosis* 101-139, and the letter *To Timotheus*).

[460] On hoplites, see n xxxx above [328d].

[461] Both of the best MSS (A and O) include notes in a second hand claiming that the correct reading is *mala kalōn*, "very beautiful" or "very noble," rather than *malakōn*, "soft."

[462] The chiton was a typical ancient Greek tunic. The Greek version of the "cubit," or length of a forearm, was the *pēchus*, measuring roughly 18 inches.

[463] Richter 1929 has proposed that the famed Amorgian fabric was not itself flaxen but rather of *silk*, arguing that this material was known to the Greeks long before it was first imported from China. Cf. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 148-154.

[464] Cebes and Simmias were two Theban companions of Socrates and his main interlocutors in Plato's *Phaedo*. Cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.48, 3.11.17. On Simmias, see also Plato, *Phaedrus* 242b. Both Cebes and Simmias are said by Diogenes Laertius (2.16-17) to have written dialogues still extant in his time.

write whom it is not easy to refuse openly. For a god begins the serious letter, gods the less [serious].[465]

The ambassadors, too, begged me to send you a letter, as was also likely; for they are very eagerly extoling you and me everywhere, and not least Philagrus, whose hand was then ailing. And [363c] when Philaedes had come from the Great King,[466] he was speaking about you; were it not that it would not have been a very long letter, I would have written what he said, but as it is, inquire of Leptines.[467]

If you should send the corslet or anything else of the things about which I am sending [this] letter, entrust[468] them to anyone you yourself might wish, or else to Terillus; he is one of those who is always sailing, an associate of ours and smart[469] both in other things and especially

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[465] See n xxxx above [360a] for a discussion of the important word *sumbolon*, translated "token" in this paragraph. In this context, it would not be out of place to use the translation "secret sign" or "password." Bentley has provided what probably remains the most insightful suggestion concerning this cryptic passage: "The *symbol* [Plato] here speaks of made no part of the letters, nor began the first paragraph of them; for here's neither *θέος* nor *θέοι* in that manner in any one of the thirteen. 'Twas extrinsic (if I mistake not) to the letter, and was a mark at the top of it in these words, *σὺν θεῷ* if it was a serious one; otherwise, *σύν θεοῖς*. These two were the common forms in the beginning of writings or any discourse of importance: and in their usage were equivalent and indifferent; philosophers, as Xenophon and others, having it sometimes *σύν θεοῖς*; and poets, as Euripides and Aristophanes, *σύν θεῷ*. So that Plato could not have chosen a symbol fitter for his turn, being in neither way liable to any suspicion, nor any inference to be drawn from it to discover his real opinion" (1838, 412). It is unmistakable that Plato's choice of password suggests some inclination toward monotheism; Bentley's purpose in discussing it is to refute Cudworth's argument that this marks Letter Thirteen as the work of a Christian forger. According to Harward's note *ad loc*, this contention of Cudworth's began the controversy surrounding the genuineness of the letter. On a close variant of the expression *sun theōi* in the *Letters*, see n xxxx above [311d].

[466] The typical designation for the king of Persia, who would have been Artaxerxes II at this time.

[467] Nothing is known of either Philagrus or Philaedes.

[468] Lit. "give" (*dos*).

[469] Lit. "graceful" (*charieis*); on this usage, see Harward's note *ad loc*.

concerning philosophy. He is related by marriage to Tison, who was *polianomos*[470] when we sailed away.[471]

Be strong,[472] and philosophize, and turn[473] the other [363d] youths, and offer fond greetings to your fellow-spherists[474] on my behalf, and command both the others and especially Aristocritus,[475] if any speech or letter should go from me to you, to take care that you perceive it as quickly as possible, and to remind you so that you take care of [what is said in] the letters that have been sent. And now, do not fail to take care of the returning of the money[476] to Leptines but return it as quickly as possible, in order that the others, too, in seeing this, might be more eager to be of service to us.

[363e] Iatrocles, the one who was then, together with Myronides, set free by me, is sailing now with the things[477] sent from me; set him up in [your] hire somewhere, then, as he has goodwill toward you, and if you

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[470] The office of *polionomos* is known from inscriptions to have existed in a certain Tarentine colony in southern Italy. There was no such office at Athens.

[471] Nothing is known of either Terillus or Tison.

[472] See n xxxx above [310b].

[473] The word for "turn" is *protrepou*, which means more literally to turn someone or something *toward* some object or goal. This same word is sometimes used in connection with exhortation toward philosophy, as it is thematically in Plato's *Cleitophon* (see, e.g., 410e5-8).

[474] "Fellow-spherists" translates *susphairistas*, a word that in some contexts would suggest "one who plays at ball with another" (LSJ *ad loc*). This may be the meaning here, as is implied for example by Harward's translation, "Give my greetings to your tennis-club" (see also Bury and Post, *ad loc.*) But Morrow prefers the other evident possibility, translating "Give my greetings to your fellow students of the spheres," which, as he explains in a footnote, would refer to the study of astronomy (see also Post 140-1 n16). One should not overlook the theme of Pythagoreanism in this letter, and in the *Letters* generally, in interpreting this strange phrase.

[475] Nothing is known of this Aristocritus.

[476] Here "money" translates *arguriou*, lit. "silver."

[477] It is equally possible that this could mean "the men sent from me."

should wish for something make use of him. And save either this letter itself or a reminder of it, and be the same.[478]

[478] Nothing is known of either Iatrocles or Myronides.